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MUSIC AND MANNERS

IN

FRANCE AND GERMANY:

A

SERIES OF TRAVELLING SKETCHES

OF

Art and Society.

BY HENRY F. CHORLEY,

AUTHOR OF "CONTI," ETC. ETC.

"Praising all, is praising none."—*Burney.*

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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A NIGHT ON THE BROCKEN.

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A TRIFLE of tobacco-smoke to be swallowed allowed for, the drive from Brunswick to Hal-

berstadt was pleasant enough. The afternoon was glorious—the perfection of autumn weather, and the road offers some agreeable objects. Between Brunswick and Wolfenbuttel stands the Duke's country-house of Richmond, which is apparently as English in its Elizabethan style, and in the trimness of the rich garden round it, as in its name. Then the trees on either side of the way were hung with a profusion of apples, plums, and pears, glowing with every sunny colour of the season, and so appetizing as to make it positively disappointing that, at the first change of horses, no other refection was to be procured than a cup of coffee and a cigar. Every trench-bank and field enclosure, too, showed a roadside Flora of poppies, campanulas, and huge mulleins, gay enough to attract any eye that is sensitive to rich colour. Not long after Wolfenbuttel was left behind, the Brocken began to rise on the horizon;—and what is there in the world so engaging to the fancy as watching the gradual growth of a hill, more especially if the hill have a name and a legend?

My companions in the schnellpost were

cheerful and good-natured. While waiting under the vine which clothes the wall of the Brunswick post-house, we had become very sociable. As we jogged on, we discussed the Festival just over, and agreed that Mendelssohn was the musical hope of modern Germany. I was warned, when I reached Leipsic, to open my ears to Mademoiselle Schlegel, as a young singer of great promise, and excessively pretty to boot. I was promised a wonderful treat in Berlin, from the Löwe — the only songstress, as far as my experience served, who enjoyed a general, as distinguished from a local reputation, in North Germany, and was as popular among all travellers as Madame Vestris in England. It was of no use to quote Grisi or Persiani,— had I named Madame Dorus-Gras, a French singer, it would have been as much as my popularity was worth. "There was no one, there had been no one, like the Löwe, for beauty and brilliancy, since the days of Sontag: — happy was the man who could hear her, and happier he who could speak to her!"

The day went down gloriously, and the

friendly and thriving town of Halberstadt, where we joined the great road to Berlin, looked quaintly picturesque in the strong lights and broad purple shadows of evening. I cannot fancy a pleasanter halting-place for a night than the Prinz Eugen. While I was discussing the savoury roast partridge (a sure *piece de resistance*, let me warn all those whom the indigestibilities of a German supper *karte* annoy), the master of the house came and took the chair at my side, — as handsome, well-informed, and thoroughly courteous a host as Prussia can show. One of my fellow-travellers had acquainted him with my designs on the Harz country, and my inexperience in its language; and, with as much circumstantial civility as he could have used to detain the most desirable guest, in ten minutes of very good French, the whole plan was arranged for me, commodiously and inexpensively, and I was at leisure to satisfy as well as I could the curiosity of my friendly entertainer about the Eglintoun tournament. Upon the strength of this, the Coronation, and the London and Birmingham railroad, any one who could com-

municate was sure of being voted agreeable in Germany during the summer of 1839. Only six weeks later, while sitting among heaps of pressed grapes, at the door of a tavern at St. Goar, waiting the coming of a Rhine steamer, I saw the boatman who had rowed me from the Lurleiberg pause over his bottle of colourless and fragrant wine, and the untidy landlady let her knitting drop forgotten on her knee, while a white-haired and spectacled official belonging to that small town read aloud, from the "Rhein-und-Mosell-Blatt," the tragical issue of Mr. Pratt's upholstery, and the last Scottish freak of the Marquis of Waterford. To think of thus stumbling, as it were, upon Lord's Cricket Ground, and Limmer's Hotel, within sight of the Katz and the Schweitzer Thal!

But I am wandering away from the capital host, and capital coffee, and capital bed, at the Prinz Eugen. It was five o'clock in the morning when I woke and leaned out of my window. The air was clear and fresh enough to put Spleen itself into spirits — the sky without a cloud, and Day coming up so fast and so

brightly behind the minarets of the great church as to declare that a splendid sunrise was at hand. Splendid it was; and I hastened abroad to spend the half hour which was to elapse ere the vehicle and Jehu purveyed for my Harz excursion made their appearance, in prying about the little town. But I did not get beyond the Platz — a fine enclosure shaded with well-grown trees, surrounded with ancient houses, and commanded at its extremities by the Frauen Kirche and the Dom-Kirche—a pair of grand old buildings, which looked solemn, but not severe, in the cheerful but delicate light of early day. In a niche against one of the houses was a grim carved effigy, which, for collar, had been decked with a garland of withered flowers. Here and there the morning face of comfortable man or comely matron looking out of an open door, or through a diamond-bright window, made an impromptu Ostade, which would have been worth its hundreds in a picture-gallery. Few places so casually seen have left so clear and so cheerful an impression on my mind as Halberstadt. To judge from the

list of its manufactories it ought to be thriving as well as cheerful; nor should the lover of letters like it the less from its having been the residence of Gleim, the Mæcenas of some of Germany's best men of genius. To tempt the musician, I have but to say that the organist of the Dom-Kirche, whom we met at Brunswick, so loudly vaunted his instrument (but organists have that way with them), that Dr. Mendelssohn had consented but the day before my arrival to stop on his homeward journey to Leipsic, and give it a trial at the hour of fashionable London midnight, — or six in the morning.

Half an hour behind his time, a shabby little carriage, drawn by a shabby little pair of horses, jingled up to the door of the Prinz Eugen. But the equipage was well worth waiting for in virtue of its driver; — as honest, good-natured, and intelligent a fellow as ever made a party of pleasure more pleasant. Small civil eyes with a touch of roguery in them, a walnut-brown complexion, a wide mouth containing a case of the whitest, cleanest teeth in North Germany, a stout jean shooting-jacket, and a tidy blue

cloth cap, — such ingredients made up my Jehu, who, to crown his perfections, could command a few words of French, a few of English, a few of Latin, and neither smoked nor wished to smoke. He deserved to belong to the town. We were presently rattling through its ancient gateway, and across the open plain towards the hill country. The morning kept its early promises — more inspiriting weather for a ramble could not be imagined — and those alone, who, during fifteen years, have only exchanged town for town, can comprehend the fulness of good-will with which I gave myself up to the influence of the hour and the scenery.

It was a day of pictures. For the first German mile we had groups of people harvesting in the fields, looking up as we passed to nod, and greet us with a good-humoured "*tag*," or hailing us from the primitive waggons of the country upon which they were clustered. Then, though wretchedly poor was the hamlet (I lost its name) at which Carl Alhelm stopped to give his horses and himself breakfast from the same junk of pumpernickel — it was a fair specimen of the

ruinous-picturesque. Shortly after leaving this, the hills, every one of which has its own quaint form and its own quaint legend, began to close in upon us; the fruit-trees on either side the road to be fewer, and the chesnuts more numerous. We were presently within sight of Wernigerode, a strange little walled town, overcrowed by its *schloss* — an imposing but heavy mass of building which loads the thickly-planted hill rising abruptly beyond the walls. Not far from this we encountered another painter's group. It was an itinerant puppet-show, the properties of which, dead and living, were crammed into a small covered cart, while the lank, knavish, gipsy-looking man, who throughout all the world presides over such vanities, trudged lazily on by its side. I have seen a Flight into Egypt by one of the ancient Flemish masters — Paul Brill, perhaps, or Breughel — with precisely such a landscape, and figures little more refined. Wernigerode was soon passed, and Altenrode too, of whose old convent there was no getting a peep among the high walls and thick-leaved plum-trees, and a good hour before mid-

day we were fairly on the skirts of the Wonderland; at Ilsenburg — a little red-roofed village nestling picturesquely in the opening of the valley, where the Ilse, clear and brown as a cairngorm stone, hurries out into the plain. At the "Rothe Forelle," *Anglicé*, Red Trout, — a pleasant little inn, — mules and guides are to be heard of, and, report says, to be paid for exorbitantly. In my own case it was not so: the breakfast was cheap and good; and my Jehu, from whom I was here to part company for the day, found out a guide for me, who, if less companionable, was no less honest and civil than himself.

There were other parties bound for the Brockenhaus — our station for the night — whom I had time to observe during my own breakfast, and while waiting till the guide should have dined. One pair in particular — an old man and a boy — made a singular contrast. Never did I see a more repulsive study of Age without respectability than the former — a lean, nimble, brawling fellow, for ever in a passion, who wore a long loose wrap-rascal, the shrunk sleeves of which showed the whole

of his enormous hands, and a cap perched upon, rather than covering, a profuse crop of ill-kept and coarse grizzled hair. But his face was the worst: the yellow and blood-shot eyes, the brindled complexion of scarlet and tawny, the dry thirsty mouth garnished with straggling teeth, and always agape to the misery of every one in the neighbourhood, told of debauchery as plainly as they could speak. His companion was a fair gracious-looking boy of fourteen, with a clear blue eye, rosy German cheeks, and a voice as shrill but twice as loud as a girl's. For a good five minutes after they had left The Red Trout I heard the hoarse bawl of the one, and the piercing answer of the other, as they pushed off towards the Brocken. It was a positive boon to be spared such company on the road.

My guide came. He, too, was an old man, but with his wise withered face and his white hair, his tidy blouse and his sheepskin knapsack, he looked like a palmer, when compared with the unclean roisterer who had just quitted us. In five minutes we were beyond the boundaries of

Ilsenburg, and, turning away from the stream, began to ascend a steep bank, close under the walls of a poor little grey church, built among the ruins of a monastery. This can now only be traced in a dusty and dark cellar, the mouth of which must be passed by all who would mount to the Ilsenstein. The path leads through a croft, which was as thickly spread with the lilac crocus as if it were a Nottingham meadow. Then comes a fir wood: huge stones shagged with moss, peering out capriciously on either side of the path; and among them the richest tufts of foxgloves I have ever seen. Where, indeed, should faëry-caps grow if not in the Harz country? Here and there, as we began to mount, an opening through the trees afforded a lovely prospect of the plain, dotted with clean red-roofed villages, and framed by the entrance of the valley. The Ilsenstein, passing which — as all the readers of Shelley's wonderful fragment from "Faust" know — the Witch, on the Walpurgis-night, saw

"—— the owl awake in the white moonshine,"

is a grand promontory of rock, jutting out into

the valley, and crowned with an iron cross, in memorial of the brave achievements of Count Stolberg's troop during the war. The view thence is superb. But with the best will in the world to surround myself with a visionary atmosphere, I could not do it. The day was too fine; the brawling of the stream, when we again joined it, too merry and musical; and the only thing to be noted as in the least "eerie," was the stillness of the columnar pine woods through which we mounted, — broken, not by bird or breeze, but by the clicking of the locked wheels of the charcoal burners' carts as they slipped down to the valley below — a measured but unfamiliar sound. As we ascended higher, the cessation of this noise was supplied by the perpetual bubbling and tinkling of countless runnels of water, that creep away under the stones, which shoulder each other as countlessly and closely as if the Gnomes had made a compact that not a tree should have room to grow: whence an unusual number of writhen serpent-like roots forced, as it were, out of the steep bank, and of distorted trunks, which, at even-fall,

might serve, in default of Kobolds or other such company, to scare and menace the fanciful. In spite of these, however, the ascent of the Brocken, even to one endowed with the most willing of imaginations, is a rough and picturesque walk of three hours and a half, up a tolerably steep and very stony hill — nothing more.

The little plain at the top, like all mountain plains, is harsh and barren in its physiognomy: the inn, a strong and gloomy house of refuge, one story high. The wind was keen enough, even on that still afternoon, to intimate how it *could* roar about the thick logs and timbers of which the Brockenhaus is built. Hard by the inn stands a tower, also built of massive wood, and the view thence is as magnificent as expanse can make it: small points, which the eye must strain itself to see honestly, standing for towns; hair lines for roads, and tufts of moss for reaches of wood. There is nothing, however, either in distance or foreground, to render it comparable to the panorama commanded by the great Winterberg in Saxon Switzerland. Had I enjoyed the tower to myself, nevertheless, I could have lingered there, as long as daylight lasted, to exercise

the powers of discovery for which such a wide prospect gives fair occasion; but I had at least twenty fellow-gazers; and what with the hubbub made by them, while hacking their names on the timber battlements, contradicting each other about this *schloss* or the other spire, at boatswain pitch — hallooing to their mates down below, or playing violent tricks with each other — a noisier score of scenery-hunters

"You would not find in Christendie."

They were, for the most part, a party of students from Göttingen, — fine lawless fellows, unkempt and loosely dressed, with every vagary of travelling-cap and knapsack, tobacco *beitel*, and fore-finger ring, — more dirty, more good-natured, more jovial than any thing of the same order to be found in England. If they had planned during a whole course of class and lecture-work, to come and "make a night of it" on the Brocken, they could not more thoroughly have carried their purposes into execution. The host, who sat in the outer hall of the house, making bird traps, seemed to concern himself little for their comfort; and, now drinking,

now smoking, now chasing each other, they scrambled hither and thither, to the Hexen altar, and the other stations of a Harz pilgrimage, till the setting of the sun and the bitter sharpness of the mountain air drove them under cover.

Were I able to do it justice, I should hardly venture to expatiate upon that set or burial of the sun, among such intensely mazarine blue clouds, as the ancient artists sometimes introduced into their landscapes with more enterprise than success. After all was grey, there remained still a long evening to be got through in a comfortless apartment, with no luxury of fare attainable to beguile the time. The party of *bürschen* withdrew into a room of their own; and there were left in the *speise-saal* with me, the aged Iniquity I had seen at Ilsenburg, his companion with the childish face and voice; another youth, a regular and respectable specimen of the German traveller; and a fourth, who, after his own pattern, was as pretty an example of a rough diamond as one could desire. He might

be some twenty-one years old or thereabouts, — stalwart, thick-set, clean-limbed, and bullet-headed, succinctly done up in a sand and salt-coloured coat, the laps of which buttoned behind in a manner more original than becoming ; — with breeches and gaiters of the same. His fist was as huge as that of Duke Adolph of Gueldres, in Rembrandt's marvellous portrait at Berlin ; his stentorian voice never was still ; his thick utterance was to be ascribed to the loss of two front teeth, which gave a peculiar villany of impudence to his face ; and when the huge bull-dog belonging to the Brocken-haus, Cerberus by name, nestled up to the side of his chair, and lifting up a surly head, showed a hair-lip, the similarity of expression between the human and the canine visages was as strong as any thing in Hood's inimitable sketches of Comparative Anatomy. Man and dog — alike burly and savage — were the very figures for a Harz adventure.

Rough as my companions presently proved themselves to be, there was none of that in-solence in all their riot, which makes the young

Englishman, when unchained, or, according to his own parlance, "out on a lark," often so intolerable. If they bawled for wine, it was that the foreigner might share; if they threatened the host with extinction because he had no cards, it was because *we* could not play; and on my withdrawing myself from their clamour, to turn over that motley record, the "Traveller's Book," I was neither molested by word, look, or sign; nor was the orgie, when at its climax, made an excuse for the slightest uncivil freedom.

This unexpected observance of the humanities by a party so thoroughly wild, and by contrast made striking, when I thought of my neighbour at the Brunswick Festival dinner, was further illustrated — at least Fancy would have it so — by the greasy pages of the *Fremdenbuch*, to which I betook myself; the four being now deep in a game not unlike the Italian *morra*. Teazed as I was with their riot, disgusted by the hoarse shrieks of the old grey-haired man, who seemed the most unruly of the party, I think I was yet more vexed by the stupidities, and worse, to which

English signatures were annexed in the "Strangers' Book." Enough high-flown German enthusiasm there was, no doubt;—doubtless, too, some German grossness;—but while I stumbled upon traces of almost every singer and dancer belonging to the Brunswick Opera, some of the names, of course, garnished with quotations, however silly, harmlessly expressive of some feeling for the scene,—it was vexatious to find Englishmen of title and family announcing their presence in one of Nature's high places, by dull and trivial jokes, which showed how little admiration they could have brought thither. Captain This chronicled the day when he "jumped Jim Crow on the Brocken." Sir That, in tracing his route, wrote himself down "as having come from nowhere, and going to Hell." The whole truth should not be spoken at all times, and in all places, says Lord Chesterfield!—With such humiliating evidences before me, I felt I had little right to quarrel with the confusion worse confounded, of shouts, exclamations, and *tisch-lieder*, which bade fair to deafen me as the advance of even-

ing wrought them up to a *crescendo*. By this time the sky had grown pitch black; and in the rare intervals, when a moment's pause permitted its being heard, there came up from the plain below, a murmur of the night-wind, as quiet as a whisper, but as deep in tone as the lowest pedal pipe of an organ. Save for that intimation, it would have been far easier to fancy one's self in Auerbach's Cellar, than on the top of the haunted mountain; for the merry ditties of Zumsteeg, and Eisenhofer, and Blum, and Osthoff, and the explosions of laughter which burst out on every side, had quite too much of rough earthly glee in them, to be for an instant accepted as the Satanic music of a Walpurgis night.

These part-songs are too little known in England, as one of the most national and not least engaging features in modern German music. We have rested upon our glees with a complacency so exclusive as to make us overlook what our neighbours were about. I question whether these German efforts were known to a dozen professors in England before

the arrival of the brothers Herrmann. The latter even were by many, who should have known better, strangely confounded with the Tyrolese minstrels; though their classical quartett playing (the best rehearsed and understood I have heard on this side the water) must have puzzled those fancying that the wild national air and the well-constructed composition were "all one concern." Among the French I am inclined to believe that the amount of real taste for and intimacy with German music is even now little less partial. A periodical critic, speaking of a concert given at Frankfort last autumn, which some untoward spirits wished to disturb by singing "La Marseillaise," in proof of the French sympathies of the Germans, says, "And this was in the midst of their own favourite music — in the midst of a classical programme, combining the severe and the wild—'*des morceaux*' of Beethoven, and Tyrolese airs!"

Nothing can be much more ignorant in its flippancy than this; as if the popular music of Germany had not been contributed by its best hands! It is forty years since Zelter (best

known in England as Goethe's correspondent) and his friend Fleming founded at Berlin a congregation of staid elderly men, who met once a month to sit down to a good supper, and to diversify the pleasures of the table by singing four-part songs, principally composed by themselves.* Their number was forty; and far the larger part of it composed of amateurs or men in office. It was an original statute that no one was eligible as a member who was not a composer, a poet, or a singer. During his lifetime Zelter was their president and principal composer; and in no branch of art, perhaps, did his peculiar talent evidence itself so brightly as in these convivial effusions, where humour, raciness, a masterly employment of the limited materials at his disposal, and a fine sense of

* I am not able to mention the date of Haydn's "Cat's Fugue," in four parts, but I think it must belong to an earlier period, and in any case is valuable as an evidence of grave science applied to the popular uses of mirth; — I have heard too, unless I greatly mistake, of comic part-songs as well as *quodlibets* by Sebastian Bach. I feel it, however, particularly incumbent here to remind the reader that I am not writing history, but sketching impressions.

the poetry he took in hand distinguish him among his contemporaries. Goethe used to give his songs to be composed by Zelter; and many of them were sung at the Berlin "Liedertafel" before they were printed or known elsewhere. Fleming also contributed some fair musical compositions—that to Horace's ode, "Integer vitæ," amongst others.

It was in the year 1815, or thereabouts, that Berger, Klein, and a younger generation of musicians founded a young "Liedertafel" society, on the same principle, and for the same number of members. Friedrich Forster wrote some very pretty songs for it. Hoffmann, the novel writer and *kapellmeister*, made it one scene of his strange and extravagant existence; and left behind him there an immortal comic song—"Turkische Musik," the words by Friedrich Forster. In general, a gayer and more spirited tone pervaded this younger society than belonged to their classical seniors. It was the practice of both bodies to invite guests on holiday occasions; and by the younger part-singers ladies were admitted twice a year.

Nothing could be sprightlier or pleasanter — a little extra noise allowed for — than these latter meetings.

It would seem as if the old German love of corporate processions — the old affection for guilds and burgherships — found an expression in the societies to which this couple of institutions gave rise. They were not long in spreading far and wide. The good suppers became of less integral consequence; original compositions were not always attainable; but in every town it was natural to collect the younger men of all classes, for the purpose of singing together. A regular system of organisation, of division and subdivision, has arranged itself. The town societies in combination form provincial assemblies, where many hundreds come together. In the north of Germany the large class of young men, who are either schoolmasters or organists in the towns and villages, or are educated as such at the normal schools, have societies of their own, and periodical celebrations.

The provincial festivals of these societies are held in the good time of the year, so that open

air performances are practicable. A fine site, too, is a thing always chosen. Not very long before my Harz ramble, the Liedertafeln societies of that district had been holding a congress at Blankenburg. The natural man of the German, indeed, which seems to require a pipe every hour, and a refection at every milestone, seems never, by the indulgence of his appetites, to be coarsened out of his love of Nature. He loves a fine view to smoke over;—will make a riot in the years of his cub-*hood* in such a sanctuary as the top of the Brocken over night, and still earnestly enjoy the panorama and the mountain-walk in the morning. One might have thought that the beer-cellar and "the bosky bourne" must appeal to a totally different class of pilgrims; but it does not seem so. There is a picturesque spirit in all German public festivities, to which we never approach nearer than by rifling conservatories of their flowers, to die in the stifling and oleaginous atmosphere of a ball-room. These Liedertafeln societies take part in other celebrations not their own. When Schiller's statue was inau-

gurated in Stuttgart, the singing bodies of all the towns in the districts round about poured in through the gates of the town, one after the other, each with its banners and its music, till the separate chords, to speak fancifully, united in a grand chorus in the market-place. And while there exists a well-trained army of volunteer choristers ready to be called into action on all occasions — it need not be pointed out how different it is in quality to the body of subordinates at once semi-professional and untaught, at whose mercy lies so much of the best music ever to be heard in England — I should say, *laid;* for part-singing is now flourishing with us like the bean-tree in the Faëry Tale.

It is needless, again, to remark how the works which make a whole great people vocal, — "a whole country" (to quote a forcible expression of the accomplished musical friend to whom I am here indebted for my facts) "absolutely heave with harmony,"— must have a value and an interest in more aspects than one. If we lay aside the sober and serious compositions of the elderly gentlemen, and, on the other, the

familiar "Crambambuli," and other such ditties of the *bürschen* (musical weeds worth nobody's owning), there is on every hand, and in every guild, much to interest. To offer an instance or two likely to be familiar to the English — Music has nothing nobler in her stores than the battle songs in which the harmonies of Weber and the burning words of Körner are united. We sit by our firesides, it is true, and know not the sound of an enemy's cavalry in our streets, nor the booming of an enemy's cannon without our gates; and hence are touched only faintly by the spell of the soul within them; but it is impossible coldly to listen to the masculine chords and bold modulations of "Lutzow's Wild Chase," and the "Sword Song," and the "Husarenlied." Again, we have taken home to ourselves and half nationalised "Am Rhein*," among our

* As the Rhine Song is here spoken of as a composition, the name of its composer may be given (on Berlin authority), as it has been attributed by some to Haydn. It is now said to belong to the same Schulz who was employed on a far less ungenial task, the setting to music of the translated choruses of Racine's "Athalie." He was a *kapellmeister* at Copenhagen.

"Black-eyed Susan"s and "Rule Britannia"s, because of its spirit and beauty; — though we cannot feel, save dramatically and by going out of ourselves as well as from home, the joviality and mirth of those who dwell in a wine-land, or the kindling of such a spirit as moved the army of Liberators on their return from victory, when within sight of Ehrenbreitstein, to burst out with one consent into that noble melody which was heard with little ceasing for two days and nights while the band was passing over the river!

Honour, then, to the part-songs of Germany, and better acquaintance with them! is not the worst toast one could propose at a glee club. But I must say, that, beyond having harmonised our "Rule Britannia" in one edition of their "Orpheus," or Part-Singer's *Vade Mecum*, my friends the Germans trouble themselves far too little with our vocal music. By the surprise, as well as delight, which I have seen our madrigals excite in them, it is plain that the reciprocal indifference has been mutual. It ought to be so no longer. If these be not great days of creation, they ought to be good days

of acquisition.—That long rambling vocal *solos* are ineffective and absurd, and that to cut up a poem into as many movements as there are lines is to betray want of power over forms and progressions, the English glee-writer might learn from such well-knit and admirable compositions as the "Rastlose Liebe" of Spohr, or the beautiful recent productions of Mendelssohn. The German composer of vocal quartetts might learn to lay stress upon such delicacy of effect as is to be gained by the admixture of female voices from such elegant and charming strains as Stevens's "Ye spotted snakes," and Horsley's "See the chariot." I would alike give over to separate and utter demolition, the rambling accompanied *scenas* and songs which some of our classical writers have devised for the exhibition of a bass or counter-tenor voice, and the instrumental *polaccas* and waltz tunes by Blum and Kuffner, and even Eisenhofer (who is sometimes a delicious melodist*),

* As in his "Schlaf wohl," one of the most lulling tunes in the catalogue of serenades; in its luxurious sweetness little inferior to the charming theme, "Secondate aurette amici," in "Cosi fan tutte."

which disfigure their collections. Enough remains on both sides to be of use and help to the rapidly increasing schools of popular music in England and Germany.

This digression is to be understood as filling a chasm in my chronicle. I do not pretend that all these thoughts and fancies arranged themselves in my mind during the long hours of that evening in which the familiar "Der Schmidt" of Conradin Kreutzer, and a merry waltz by Blum, with its "Hop-sa-sa" burden, were heard but faintly from the next chamber — though sung by a dozen voices — so furious was the noise made by my four companions. Surely never such an outcry came out of so few bottles of wine,—only three, I think, being exhausted by them, and that so foolishly weak in quality as to be almost warrantable under the Temperance seal. Drunk they became, however, to all intents and purposes; and though I had begun by a resolution of holding out to the end as a spectator, about half-past ten the uproar became so ear-splitting that I was fain to quit the company for bed. My ill stars ap-

portioned my *zimmer* next to the room where the revel went on; and though I tried again and again to resort to the "Fantasy Pieces" of Hoffmann, which I had chosen as pocket-companion, and again and again endeavoured to read on the Brocken, as I had agreed with myself I would do, his fantastic but deeply penetrating analysis of Mozart's "Don Juan" — it was all in vain. The table was banged by fists and heels till I thought it must break — the chairs launched hither and thither so furiously that it was a marvel, at morning-light, to find one leg still united to its partner. Had the wind been provoked to come forth in his utmost fury, he must for once have been outroared. Once or twice mine host tried to quiet a riot so particularly unseasonable to those who were to rise before day-dawn; once the *stube-mädchen* put her head within the door. If piercing noise could take a form, she must have drawn herself back in the condition of the Headless Barmaid of the goblin tale. It was an hour past midnight ere the unruly pack chose to go to bed. By this time they were all so tipsy — the singers into the

bargain — that to stow each in his appointed lodgement was not easy. Up and down the corridor which divides the Brockenhaus they rushed like a menagerie let loose, pelting each other with their boots, or fighting to keep together or asunder for the night. Two of them, in one of these conflicts, at last burst my door open, and threw all their drunken weight on my bed. Luckily, my light had been extinguished for some time, and I could take means, by the aid of the tough vine-branch with which I had trudged up the Brocken, to free myself of the intruders without getting into a personal brawl. Considerably stung, as daylight showed their faces to be, by the random strokes necessary to my deliverance, the pair stumbled out as incoherently as they had tumbled in; and at half-past one in the morning, after some hours of irritating exercise (for to this does the endurance of such brutal and violent noise amount), I was at liberty to sleep as well as I could, on the fact that I had no idea of the meaning of the word "*tapage*" till I passed the night on the Brocken in the midst of a rout of Göttingen students.

CHAP. II.

RÜBELAND.

Morning on the Brocken. — Impenetrable Atmosphere. — Sunrise — Picturesque Mountain-walk to Schiercke. — Drive from Schiercke to Elbingerode. — Church Tower; — A Fantasy on Forms. — Frightful Road. — Rübeland; — Its Delicacies and its Shows. — The Baumanshöhle. — Travelling Parties. The Grotto. — Music underground. — Illuminations. — Echo. — Triumphal March. — The Dinner; the Reckoning after it. — Absurd Predicament. — North German Goodwill. — Unsuspiciousness and Art. — Mrs. Grundy not among the Amateurs. — Drive from Rübeland to Blankenburg. — Road Inspector. — Blankenburg.

During the three hours of sleep allowed me, old remembrances and new impressions combined themselves into such a whimsically distinct mosaic, that the transcript of the same would possibly not be the dullest page of these journals. But, according to Dr. Watts, the telling of dreams is the sluggard's occupation, and in the Harz country at least few deserve that character. At five o'clock the inmates of

the Brockenhaus were all shaken out of their heavy sleep, to be in time for the far-famed sunrise. One by one the spirits of the last night's orgie made their appearance, looking neither much dirtier nor more debauched for the carouse than they had done the previous evening, and alertly eager for the spectacle they had mounted to see. It was soon evident, however, that of this they were to be disappointed. The aspect of matters on issuing forth reminded me of a graphic expression in Mr. Monck Mason's account of the ascent of the great Nassau balloon, which he described as at midnight silently cleaving its way through black marble. No less dense and substantial seemed the dingy white fog in the heart of which the summit of the Brocken was imbedded and which only gave way a span's breath before us. Having blundered all round the Prospect Tower ere we came to the side of entrance, we mounted to the summit. In vain; the same world was there as below, and the only appearance or sensation, which could possibly suggest the idea of its ever being dissipated, was the sudden passage of some detached scarf

of mist, which trailed so close to the face as to make one aware of the neighbourhood of dampness in motion. The strange apparition of hands protruding from no visible bodies, of heads (*such* heads!) without shoulders, and of coat tails, seemingly to hang self-supported in the air, were presented in the area of a very few feet, more strikingly even than on the memorable eve of our young Queen's visit to the city, when half London lost its way. All that could be discovered of the progress of dawn was the change in this provoking envelope, from whitish grey to greyish white; and as our watches announced a quarter to six, the dimmest possible tinge in the east, which took a redder glory, when some fold of the mist, parting for an instant, opened out fleecy depths and vistas so interminable as to defy all hope of their ever vanishing. For one little moment, however, as I strained my eyes towards the quarter of promise, the veil was wholly rent, and a brilliant golden eye showed itself, as if to make disappointment greater, by indicating the existence of no ordinary splendour; but, in

another instant, down and round and over us on every side, swept the all-covering envelope; and the sun was seen no more. An hour was spent in vain expectation, until the very landlord of the Brockenhaus, more conscientious than some of his calling, announced that it was clearly a waste of time for any one to linger there longer, the show being postponed till another day! Such postponements, he added, fell to the lot of five travellers out of every six who hoped to assist at the far-famed sunrise from the Brocken.

The bill for night's lodging, supper, cup of morning coffee, and the refreshment of my old guide, was somewhere under the amount of four shillings; an apology being affixed to the "*Rechnung*" for the dearness of the charges, owing to the necessity of all provisions being carried up to the hill-top from a very great distance. This mighty sum discharged, the next step was to Schiercke, where Carl and his carriage were waiting; so, leaving behind the rout of *bürschen* busily resuming their staves and their knapsacks, I set forth, with a boy to carry

my wallet. The scramble down the Brocken was far more striking than the ascent had been. It was this way that Faust and Mephistopheles mounted; and the masses of rock which stared out from among the larch trees on either side of the rough path — many of them in their winding-sheets of mist, looking as grim and chill as Lapland idols,—were huge in size, and fantastic in their forms, though still not to compare with the fragments which lie about and overhang the Elbe in Saxon Switzerland. Some of the pine trees have been able to grow to a superb height and bulk, from their not shouldering each other so closely as on the other side of the mountain. That morning, too, the underwood was so netted over with gossamer, as almost to lose every form of foliage: and, as we stepped down from boulder to boulder, — my guide keeping the cold out by his pipe, — through the wet and cottony atmosphere which still formed round us an impervious screen, our rapid and silent progress had far more the air of a journey through a land of enchantment than any part of the previous day's walk. It was eight o'clock when

we reached Schiercke, a miserable little village. There I dismissed my guide; and, candied over with hoar-frost during my descent, rejoined the vehicle and its Jehu.

The road we took is by the side of the Bode, a cheerful and tumultuous mountain-brook, overhung in places by fine wooded banks, and not brawling so loudly as to drown the pleasant and lulling tinkle of the cow and sheep bells, which produces an effect not unlike a harp prelude on the upper strings. The influence of this was hardly to be resisted; and it was more asleep than awake that I drove on for the next hour and a half, till jolted beyond all power of rest or day-dreaming, as we neared Elbingerode. The round to which Tony Lumpkin treated Mrs. Hardcastle was a bowling-green compared with the road as it enters and issues from that large, naked, bleak-looking village. Of this, I remember little beyond a severe-looking, square, lumpish church, — its tower crowned with that Saracenic black cap, which seems in the Harz district as inevitably the finish for all buildings of which Chance has

been the architect, as the extinguisher is everywhere in France. Somewhere or other I have encountered a speculation upon nationality of form and style carried through all the arts; — showing, for instance, how *point* (without play upon the words) and neatness characterise alike French poetry, and painting, and costume, and architecture, and take the form of rhythm in French music: — how a richer and sweeter harmony pervades all the creations of the South; and is to be felt in the expression of the Florentine painters, and the colour of the Venetians—in the delicious measures of the versifiers, and in the whole tissue, whether popular or scientific, of Italian music. As I lay back in the hay-strewn stable-yard of the little Gasthaus at Elbingerode, at once kept awake and lulled by the chime of a quartett of flails, while my trusty driver stopped to rest his horses after the last dislocating half hour, the recurrence of this terminal form in so many of the less-pretending buildings of North Germany recalled to me the perhaps wiredrawn fancy I have journalised; and I puzzled myself in vain,

unable to hit upon any one word which should indicate the genuine and distinctive peculiarities of German, as distinguished from French and Italian art and fancy. On some one such unbroken thread, I am persuaded, do the poetry, the painting, and the music of every country lie more closely side by side than their separate historians have taken the trouble to conceive; and he who could analyse the texture and trace the direction of the support and link proper to each race and country, would perform a service of no common interest and value. The most superficial thinker upon the spirit, rather than the technicalities of Art, cannot penetrate a hair's depth beneath the surface without being lured on and tantalized by indications of central originating causes, which remain unchanged through the revolutions wrought by Time upon the outer world. It were a life's labour to follow out and combine these; and largely must the labourer be endowed with the divining rod of Fancy, as well as with the mining tools and the line and the plummet of Reason: but the labour is worth the pains.

Thus, letting Imagination take the tower of Elbingerode church as text for what is possibly but a dream, the half hour allotted to baiting was soon over. By this time the sun was very warm, and, provokingly enough, as we receded from the Brocken, the mist slowly dissipated, till the summit became as clear as it had shone when luring me to climb it while I drove along the road to Halberstadt. To extricate a pair of wheels and a pair of horses from Elbingerode, is nothing short of a feat; such a track I never passed over, save once, in a rough scrambling drive to shooting quarters, among the hills of Glamorganshire. Shortly after issuing from the little town, the road leaves the plain, and again joining the Bode, runs along the side of a valley, till, in the cleft which the stream has formed between grey and picturesque rocks, not unlike those in Middleton Dale, Derbyshire, the little village of Rübeland is seen, — a clean, warm, cheerful-looking haunt of comfort and refreshment, particularly agreeable to reach at noon-tide, after a scanty breakfast, taken at the unnatural hour

of five A. M., and seven hours of exposure to the most bracing air man can breathe.

My driver's face, it was easy to perceive, was popular in those parts; for the landlord of the "Golden Lion"—in shape and visage the very model of an English tailor — bustled to and fro on the appearance of Carl Alhelm's shabby vehicle, with an alacrity which nothing short of two coaches and four would command in England. I should have a capital dinner, he declared — trout of course (the trout of the Harz is capital), and a bottle of his best wine; — and, while my dinner was getting ready, of course I would see the Baumanshöhle, the most interesting of the grottos which make Rübeland a notorious station. I assented: — then, of course too, I would have extra lights, to show the grotto to its best advantage, — and music in it, too? When not particularly anxious or interested in the matter, or in that moody and meditative humour which makes one splenetic or intolerant, it is good wisdom to let guides and *ciceroni* take their own way. The *taxe*, too, for all these luxuries and entertainments,

was but a trifle; so the trout was to be put in the pan, and the Marcobrunner in the Bode, and the village rummaged for its band, — some twenty men in number.

Before they could be collected, two other parties arrived at Rübeland, and made haste to avail themselves of the opportunity to see the Höhle in its court dress. We mounted the steep bank at the back of the inn, each with a *kittel*, or smock frock of black glazed calico, on his arm, and were presently at the mouth of the cave. Under cover of this were waiting the musicians bespoken for my first and only benefit concert, — a set of good-humoured manly-looking fellows, a good deal besmirched with the labours of the forge and the mine. As they lay about among their cornets, trombones, and other brass instruments, some in shade, some in shine, — they made a capital painter's study of "wayfarers at the mouth of a cavern." I was much amused with one of the parties of grotto-seekers who were to bear me company. This was a gentleman with two ladies, not very young, odd-looking, and curiously tidy.

The gentleman turned up his pantaloons, to be out of danger from the drippings of the stalactites which were to be found on the floor of the cave; the lady bound a handkerchief over her cap, with as anxious a precision as if it had been a *fazzoletto* for a fancy ball. It was not this, however, that so much struck me, as the curiosity, earnest to rapacity, evidenced in all the three faces, which told a pleasant tale of powers of enjoyment, retained in all their freshness, and of credulity willing to believe every thing at a moment's word and warning. They were the most incessant talkers too I ever encountered; and from the moment when their carriage stopped at the door of the "Golden Lion," till the moment when mine drove away from it, the time of dinner inclusive, a continuous trio of two *soprani* and one baryton was never out of my ears for one solitary moment. Of the other three I have more to say presently.

After a few moments, our musicians, in single file, dropped one by one into the hole, down which too we were to vanish. Then each

of us, bearing his little tin lamp, began to pick his way down a steep and broken descent, into the bowels of the earth, with that stumbling caution, which is always laid aside some two minutes after daylight is fairly left. I am not going to course the reader through the wonders of the grotto, — the Organ, and the Lion's Head, and the Bust, and the Skeleton Hand, — which Nature and Imagination never fail between them to carve out in all such situations. The awe and mystery of the spot were entirely dissipated by the enthusiastic "*Ach!*" and "*Himmel!*" and "*Wunderhübsch!*" of my companions; and when, upon the principal guide whistling a signal, a cross of light revealed itself in the distance, and the Rübelanders struck up a Prussian march and quick step (one of those things the sight of which in an old music book transports the mind back to such strangely different times), their screams of rapture very nearly hindered me from profiting by the music. Fatiguing as is such violent admiration, it is more tolerable than sulkiness or apathy; and as the solemnities of Nature

were out of reach, it was as well to content one's self with the whimsicalities of Man.

The music produced a fair effect. In another mood, I should have wished for less lively and common-place strains, in the midst of all those dimly seen and quaintly writhen rock figures:—I should have bespoken the "Amplius," or "Confitebor," written by Beethoven for brass instruments alone, and performed at his own funeral. Yet perhaps there might have been less difference between the reverberations of a Strauss melody, and one of those dark and pompous burial strains, thus heard, than would have been felt in the aisles of a cathedral, or the saloons of a palace. The best got-up scene is often disappointing in effect, when Nature is one of the elements. I have always mistrusted open air exhibitions (even when directed by a Goethe for a classical court such as Weimar's,) as being only one degree more probable and poetical in effect, than the groups of opera milkmaids who used to pirouette among the laurels and lawns of Holly Lodge, on the anniversaries kept by

its late jovial and hospitable proprietress. The last exhibition in the Baumanshöhle was the burning of sundry blue lights, which diffused a strange and infernal glare throughout the vault, bringing all its darkest nooks and recesses into full notice, and making it a fit scene for the demon court of Ahrimanes and the resuscitation of Astarte in "Manfred." I never, till I returned to upper earth, knew the full value of "the light of common day."

By this time we were all desperately hungry, and the provisions of mine host of the "Golden Lion" recurred to me most comfortably. One other wonder of Rübeland remained. A most articulate and pertinacious Echo inhabits the crags on the side of the Bode, opposite to the Baumanshöhle; and as we walked down from the grotto, the men of Rübeland formed before us in procession, playing marches and *galoppes* as they went — the Voice from the hill mocking them all the way. In such state we arrived at the little inn, where Boniface, thinking to make a sulky Englishman comfortable according to his own liking, and turning a deaf ear to all

my sociable inclinations, handed me off to a little clean bed-room, glaring with sunlight, and there set before me the promised treat. I could not help thinking I was dining after the fashion of the monarch in "the Song of Sixpence," when, by way of a last indulgence, the village band ranged itself round the window, and gave one more hearty flourish of their trumpets — "an appeal," thought I, "to the long purse which my countrymen are presumed to carry." So availing myself of the interval between the *forellen* (trout) and the eternal *Kalb'sbraten* (roast veal) of a German dinner, I opened the window, determined for once in my life to make myself popular by an act of munificence.

Out came my purse — out came its contents; when, at that moment, a conviction in which I know not whether dismay or diversion predominated, flashed on my mind. I had left a good half of the *thalers* apportioned for my Harz journey of three days, with my heavy baggage, at Halberstadt; and if I paid for my trout and my trumpet-ry with the most laudable at-

tention to economy, it stared me in the face that I should then have some twenty *groschen*, and no more, left for the remainder of my tour. The thorough absurdity of such a falling-short after such an extra regale was all but irresistible; but it was vexatious, owing to carelessness, to be compelled to stint the good-humoured musicians of Rübeland: and some will comprehend the feelings of relief with which I saw the last of them disappear, slowly, and, I dare say, disappointed. Then came a moment's brown study; and, but for the summons of the landlord, who, armed with a dish of plum jelly, recommended me to turn and finish my roast meat while it was hot, I might have leaned out into the still, sunshiny village street, pondering ways and means for the rest of the afternoon.

Pondering, however, would do no good: the fact was clear that my money was all but done, and only half of my Harz round accomplished. I called my *kutscher*, and interrogated him as to the possibility of his delivering me that night at the Prinz Eugen. His horses would not do it, he said, and he could not in conscience take me

home without my having seen the most beautiful thing in the Harz — the Ross-trappe. In truth, the brilliancy of the weather, and the rarity of such an excursion, made the thoughts of abridging my first plan thoroughly distasteful. So I sent away my dinner, paid my bill, again counted over my *groschen*, and again leaned out of the window in search of an idea. Some money was to be raised, it was clear; — but from whom?

A laugh, in six parts, with a brisk *obligato* accompaniment of knives and forks, from the sociable party in the parlour, determined me. I resolved to try what the compassion of my fellow grotto-hunters would do. As I stood with the handle of the door betwixt the rooms in my hand, a hundred tales of the frolics of impudent travelling Englishmen came back to me, and I caught a glimpse in the glass of a person too thoroughly disreputable-looking, by reason of early rising, exposure to the air, and the climbing of muddy ladders, to stand any chance of being believed or assisted; even if he could keep down the strong sense of diver-

sion, which the contrast between the parade before and the petition after dinner excited. A moment more, and I should have lost command of my gravity. So I threw open the door, and, by the aid of the better French than my own of a lady of the party, managed to make my difficulty known. Before my tale was half ended, before I could unfold my passport, or a single authentication to encourage the benevolent, or to explain where I came from and whither I was going, every purse and pocket-book was out on the table: — every one was pressing offers of service upon me with a wholesale liberality which it warms the heart to remember; and so earnestly, as well as unanimously, that I had to raise my voice to the highest pitch to give my name and address in Berlin. No one would look at a single corroboratory document, and I might have levied contributions to any amount. Of course I preferred aid from those belonging to the place of my immediate destination; and having helped myself as moderately as possible out of their store, we shook hands and parted, in the midst of a peal

of merriment and mutual good wishes, which are already like things in a dream. I might have spared the egotism of this little adventure, did I not hope that an expression of hearty gratitude might, by some freak of chance, haply meet the eye of those who rendered me such essential service; and were not this timely aid, given to an utter stranger at a moment's warning, too closely illustrative of the unaffected and unsuspecting goodwill which, as far as I know, distinguishes social intercourse in Germany, to be omitted from pages in which Manners as well as Music are sketched.

The health and prosperity, indeed, of the best music of Germany — that of combination — is largely owing to the friendly unsuspiciousness which allowed me to be so seasonably helped, and which manifests itself in a freedom and ease of intercourse between the sexes, bearing upon Art with direct and important influences. Mrs. Grundy is rarely heard of among the young ladies and young gentlemen of the country, however pertinaciously they choose to sing choruses together or practise the

harmony-music of instruments. As a friend of mine remarked, when adverting to the hinderance which manners, as well as artificial refinements, present to a full and hearty combination of the amateurs of England or France, "the obstacle, in both countries, is the difficulty your ladies find in moving alone, without servants, gentlemen, and other accompaniments *obligato*. Yet this is almost indispensable to such an undertaking, unless it be confined entirely to the inferior classes. Now our damsels, even at night, if there are three or four of them, and an old spinster in the rear, will roam about and fear nothing; or the singing gentlemen will accompany them home; at the bare idea of which every Frenchman's morals would go into fits." There is something in this worthy of honest attention. We cannot, perhaps, return on our track so as to assume a more primitive form of manners; and no audacity is so unbridled, no affectation so pernicious, as the courage and the artlessness of an acted simplicity. The uneasy shame of the first adult English waltzers was a more dangerous profligacy than the unconscious

effrontery of many a professional *danseuse*, who has been trained to her exhibitions from her cradle. While exciting our energies for the diffusion of Music, as a desirable and attainable household guest, we shall labour in vain till something is done towards rendering it independent of all cumber, and formality, and expense; to make it a thing of daily love and custom, and not of show. We have better voices than the Germans, and a fair musical organization; but the scientific training of patient study is not less wanting among us, than the social support of a system of manners which shall give room to the art to move easily; and by detaching it from an exclusive association with paid and public exhibitions, deliver it from the undistinguishing ban under which Intellect and Morality have so unfairly placed it.

I saw nothing more beautiful in the Harz country than my drive from Rübeland to Blankenburg. The weather continued genial and cloudless, and the instance of goodwill I have recorded was surely enough to make the dullest of spirits sunshiny. Thus, let no one take my word for it, that Bodenthal is the most beautiful

of villages; niched though it be beneath high crags dotted with pine trees, and with its group of marble works, which have availed themselves of the "water privilege," to stand for the never-omitted water-mill of our landscape painters. But such it seemed. Nor dare I aver that the hilly miles from Bodenthal to Blankenburg, undulating between warm sloping meadows, covered with noble oaks, whose lower branches sweep the ground, are a richer passage of country than could be found on many a mail-road in England — say the valley of the Severn. Yet, as Blankenburg is approached, and the country opens, I thought I had never seen view so beautiful, — the heavy and quaint-looking castle of the town laid along rather than seated on a knoll above it, and the Regenstein, serving as frames to a wide reach of country. As we were driving from Hüttenrode the way was blocked up by a heavy wain, loaden with sweet and fresh hay. From the back of this a man jumped out — in face, voice, and dress the very double of the Ettrick Shepherd — and offered Carl an armful of provender for his horses in return for a ride and a little good company. He was the inspec-

tor of the roads in the district, and, getting up beside my Jehu, began, at a noisy rate, to do his part in making me feel at home, by telling me all the news "of the country side." I tried my best to catechise him about the meeting of the Liedertafeln societies of the district, which only shortly before had taken place at Blankenburg; but as I did not understand one word in ten he said, of course what he answered was not worth journalising. He had plenty to tell me on that subject, however, as well as about the excellence of the crops, the good condition of Carl's horses, and the roughness of the road. The last was enough to make even a bunch of thistles palatable to the poor fatigued beasts who had dragged us over it; — how they must have relished, then, their fresh and fragrant supper! A hundred yards before we entered Blankenburg, he leaped from the box, and disappeared among a gang of men at work, with a promise that I should find a good supper, a good bed, and a good host at the "Weisse Adler." His promise was fulfilled to the letter; and is so, I trust, for the comfort of all travellers, even unto this day.

CHAP. III.

THE ROSS-TRAPPE.

Blankenburg to Thale. — Blech-hütte. — One-eyed Guide. — The Ascent. — Garland Weavers. — Harper on the Hill. — Echo and Pistol-shooting. — The Summit. — The Bode-Kessel. — The Descent. — A Travelling Group. — A solitary Painter. — A Wood Scramble. — Conclusion.

Perhaps I ought to stop at Blankenburg, having no pretensions to draw out an Itinerary of the Harz, and few adventures during my third and last day's ramble to report, which touch either Music or Manners. But it is difficult to break off in a journal full of those pleasant remembrances that light up the fogs of a wintry spring, and fill a dingy street-prospect with

"A mountain ascending, a vision of trees."—

A little jaded, and very unwilling to move, I was driven out of Blankenburg at half-past seven in the morning. Carl would fain have tempted me up to the platform on which the *schloss* is built to take a look at the prospect, and an

observation of the building, whose greatest attraction, in my eyes, was its possession, beyond all doubt, of The old original White Lady, or Household Demon (cousin-german to the Irish Benshee), whose appearance denotes that a death is sure to take place. But I recollected that the Palace at Berlin has another White Lady equally authentic, and that few spirits of any colour are ever abroad in the morning air. I had seen, moreover, the best of the view on the previous evening; so I sate still, and we drove on.

From Blankenburg, the road, which is wretched, becomes more and more insipid, the *bergs* keeping in the back-ground, till it suddenly turns in among them at Thale, and crosses the Bode, over a wide bed of blanched stones, among which the stream soaks. The "water privilege" is here employed in the service of iron works; and just ere reaching the village belonging to these, which is well nigh as black and grim with charcoal dust as if it stood on the spur of the Yorkshire hills, a one-eyed lad, in face and figure a perfect Flibbertigibbet, fastened upon

us. This was to be my guide to the Ross-trappe. Never had any one more completely the true hackney tone and hackney slouch of the fraternity, and it was lucky for my undisturbed meditations that he sucked away so constantly at his pipe as only to be able to give out his legends and other information in scraps between the whiffs. A rough plank bridge crosses the bright and busy Bode, and in a few minutes more the path begins to lose itself among trees, and to mount so steeply, that one seems to ascend by stories rather than a more gradual acclivity. It was easy to gather that this was the great lion of the Harz, from the number of the temptations thrown in the way of the visitor. Scarcely were we in the wood, than a pretty child ran after us, with a nicely knit garland of oak leaves, which she threw over my shoulders; and by the number of dead ones which strewed the path, it would seem as if the trade was a brisk one. There are many artificial stations for rest as the hill is mounted: at Eckart's Höhe, a bare piece of rock jutting out through the trees, where the view over the

plain becomes magnificent, and, to my taste, surpassing, because within more manageable compass than, the wider panorama of the Brocken, the pilgrim is invited to halt to eat and drink at a way-side cottage covered with heather, whose mistress, when I saw it, was a plump pale old *frau*, with as shrewd an eye and as tidily formal a cap as if Gerard Dow had just let her out of one of his pictures. Beside her, "at the shieling door," was a faded elderly young person, with that crossed-in-love watering-place look of haggard welcome, which, to my discomfort, threw light on a harp I had seen an instant before under a tree. It was a pity that so lovely a scene should be spoilt by an exhibition; and somehow or other I never felt so intolerant of a favourite instrument (even when disgraced by the foul embraces and the musical *charlatanerie* of a B——) as when its owner, laying aside a roomy blue worsted stocking she was knitting for the wearing of her own solid leg, began to tinkle out waltzes, seguidillas, and the other tunes one associates so naturally with all that is most squalid in musical itine-

rancy, and all that is stalest in town life;—with dancing dogs and blind men, the scarlet tin tray with its rattling coppers, and the parades of Cheltenham! — Those worn-out scraps of ball-room and ballet music, and the unmeaning mechanical smile with which my *groschen* were acknowledged, put *a bad taste* into my mind as I mounted a story higher. As we came nearer the summit there was more show-work to be gone through; but this was impressive rather than otherwise. A smart round of pistol-shooting was going on, the echoes of which rolled away in muttered thunder among the rocks, like the sound of the bowlers whom Rip Van Winkle saw in Sleepy Hollow. At last we came out upon the cliff, which we had been now climbing during a hot half hour.

The Ross-trappe is a bare and splendid piece of rock, challenged from the other side of the narrow rift, through which foams the Bode, by many no less wild and lofty crags, — the Devil's Ballroom, &c. &c., — and set round with spires, and needles, and strangely balanced lumps of rude stone, thrown about

into the most extravagant attitudes, and menacing each other from point to point. On the flattened platform at the top of the cliff where I stood, are two or three large indentations. There is a goodly legend belonging to these, of a Princess Cunigonda, pursued by a ravisher or fiend — perhaps both, and the miraculous leap of a horse, which either saved her or destroyed her rescuer. That I retail this after dear Mrs. Nickleby's fashion is not the fault of Flibbertigibbet — for he shouted it out at the top of his lungs, as loudly as if I had bespoken the tale to try the echo withal, in place of the pistol and the cannon-shooting which is performed for those delighting in sudden noises. But I was looking up the valley of the Bode too busily to heed him; — following the long horizontal lines which seam its grim slanting crags so thickly feathered with fir-trees, and watching far down in the dark chasm the whirling water, which gleamed among the bushes like a shaken diamond chain, boiling more and more impetuously, in proportion as it is near the Bode *kessel*, or spring, where it wells up into daylight. After lingering a long time on the summit, and pick-

ing out the town of Quedlinburg, and the eight towers of Halberstadt in the distance, we hurried down a rude path, to the great discomfiture, I fear, of a timid young lady and her party who were ascending. She had taken off her bonnet, so as to display a fine crop of bright orange-coloured hair, and had divested herself of her shawl, and her gingerbread-coloured knit mittens (the product of her own industry doubtless), that neck and bosom and arms might be dyed to match. Why, by the way, the young ladies of North Germany should affect this unlovely colour, is a point of taste as difficult to account for as the frequent love of a red umbrella among their old men, which must make it a miracle to keep turkey-cocks in a good temper in any German town. Another no less national figure was perched like a bittern at the water's edge far beneath us. His wide straw hat, blue shirt, and carnation-coloured silk neck handkerchief, setting off his jet-black beard, scarcely made a brighter spot of colour among the sober-hued stones where he had fixed his seat, than the flagrant land-

scape on which he was at work. There was the old caricature of violet hills and orange trees and China blue water which may be seen on any French paper, drawn out in all its tawdriness, just as confidently as if Nature with all her delicious hues and shades had not been before and around and above her libeller. He was better employed in biting at the long *würst* with which his mouth was half full, than in libelling green foliage and grey rocks. Presently, he, too, was shut out; and we went over a Devil's Bridge towards the last attainable station overlooking the *kessel*, or caldron. There are many scenes of the kind on a grander scale; but I doubt whether I could have been more delighted by a sight of Niagara itself, than by watching the ceaseless brewing and seething of those brilliantly clear waters which have *folded*, not worn, the stone around them, till, in its forms, it takes the easy roundness and play of drapery. It was impossible not to wish to advance beyond the station at which the rude path comes to an end, — an almost perpendicular rock blocking up the valley just above the source of

the stream. And accordingly, in spite of Flibbertigibbet's remonstrances, I started off on such a scramble through briars, stones, and hazel-bushes, as I have not undertaken since tracking the course of the brooks which, falling into the Lune above Lancaster, run through some of the loveliest rock-scenery in England. All would not do. Vexatious as it is to mortal self-conceit to be circumscribed by those who *lay out* the haunts of Nature to the utmost advantage, after half an hour vainly spent in attempting to obtain a nearer glimpse of the caldron, the roar of which took at last a positively malicious tone, the feat was abandoned as an impossibility: I turned back towards Blechhütte, there to take vehicle for Quedlinburg.

The drive to that clean-looking town, and the drive thence to Halberstadt, offered little to be remembered, save the renewed strength and spirits with which one who has "been long in populous cities pent" looks back to such a ramble as the one here journalized. But enough — I remember Byron's caution to Moore, when they stood together overlooking

the Venetian sun-set, "not to be poetical." I remember, too, that my reader is bound for the music of Berlin. Should he ever take a Harz ramble, I cannot wish him better weather than shone during my three glorious days, a more capital charioteer than Carl Alhelm, or keener feelings of enjoyment than those with which I relished this little episode of open-air life and wild scenery, in the midst of a never-ceasing course of "shining theatres," with their heavy atmospheres, and their gross illuminations, and their tawdry mockeries of the real shows and splendours of earth and heaven.—Those have already ceased to love Art, who have lost their comprehension of and affection for Nature.

GLIMPSES

OF

BERLIN.

"Nichts liegt der Musik ferner als die Ironie."—*Tieck.*

GLIMPSES OF BERLIN.

CHAPTER I.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS. — "DER FREISCHUTZ."

A Peep at a Kirmesse and the Cathedral of Magdeburg. — Arrival at Berlin changed since the Days of Burney. — First Impressions of Berlin. — The Splendour of its Buildings. — Musical Anticipations. — Illustrations of Display at Dinner. — The Afternoon of the Germans. — "Der Freischutz" at the Schauspiel Haus. — The Manner of its Performance. — The Cast of the Opera. — Mademoiselle von Fassmann. — Disappointment. — The Metropolis of Criticism. — Morning Visits in Berlin. — Rumours and Qualifications. — Partizanship. — The Fassmann and the Löwe. — Voltaire and Burney on the Berlin Spirit. — Mrs. Grundy and Mrs. Candour. — Absence of Form and Sincerity. — Scene among Artists at a German Supper-table.

SAVE the damsel, who stood under the vine-hung porch of the post-house at Egeln, to show

the splendid flaxen ringlets which were gathered up at the back of her head by a massive silver bodkin,—there was little to be seen for the first six hours after leaving Halberstadt, by the schnellpost which runs between Cologne and the metropolis of Prussia. At Magdeburg, a mid-day halt of three hours gave us time to assist at the opening of a *Kirmesse:* this would have been gay and pretty, but for a hurricane of wind, which raised clouds of sharp stony dust, to the laceration of the skins and the blinding of the eyes of holiday-keepers. The cathedral, too, was to be seen; one of the finest buildings of its class in North Germany. The front is very complete, and its two graceful lantern-towers with the noble window between them have a certain originality in the combination of their Gothic details I had not elsewhere encountered. The building has been recently repaired, so that the alabaster pulpit, by Sebastian Extel, and the tombs of Kaiser Otto, and Editha of England his wife, — a pair of stately sitting figures, — and Peter Visscher's exquisite Apostles in bronze round the monu-

ment of Archbishop Ernest, are not dishonoured by being lost amidst the dust and mildew which make so many an ancient building desolate rather than venerable. Perhaps the piers of the magnificent nave are even too brilliantly white and too trimly neat, and the arabesque paintings of the western chapel, where the Archbishop's sepulchre stands, too glaring in their renovated tawdriness, not to shock an eye unused to polychromy. Or it may be that there is little comfort in a *snatch* of a fine building thus laid hold of in the midst of a journey. The spirit of such a stately church tempts the foot to linger, and demands a mind not urged onward by anticipation. The *cicerone* of Magdeburg cathedral was at once the most exacting and mechanical of the tribe I have encountered in Germany, — possibly he had been disturbed in the midst of a jollification. At all events he smelt most fiercely of brandy, though it was scarcely one o'clock in the day.

The above laconic note, with a word or two in admiration of the panorama of strong

works, and zig-zag fortifications, girdling one of the strongest fortresses in Europe, which may be seen from the tower of the cathedral. are all that my journal records of Magdeburg. Thence to Berlin is a blank, only broken by a coarse and greasy supper at Genthin, and by a guess or two at the wide and naked splendours of Potsdam, through which the schnellpost passed an hour after midnight. One could hardly make a less interesting journey of fourteen hours; and it was with feelings of no common relief that I felt our vehicle slowly rumbling to its full stop somewhere about seven o'clock A. M. in the yard of the post-office, Berlin. From thence to the Hotel de —— the transfer is short and easy.

Modes of conveyance and usages have changed with a vengeance since Dr. Burney made the capital of Brandenburg a principal station in his musical pilgrimage. The night before he reached Berlin, he remained, as his own agreeable Journal tells us, for seven cold, dark, wet hours, stuck fast in a bog, on a bleak and barren heath, between the last post-house and

the city; and on arriving, after having been detained for three quarters of an hour at the barrier, was conducted, under custody of a centinel, to the custom-house, to abide another detention of two hours. It would have been only natural, if all his life long he had hated a place of which his first impressions were so repulsive. Thanks to the activity of M. von Nagler, roads are now smooth, and conveyances punctual and commodious. The liberality of the times has reduced the inquisitorial proceedings of the custom-house to a cursory and civil examination on the frontier: there is, then, no excuse for bad humour — call it even by the convenient name of low spirits — on the part of the traveller entering the Prussian metropolis. Yet my first feelings in Berlin were those of depression.

The finest of modern cities is like a beauty in a ball dress, and should never be first seen (let the Wordsworths write what sonnets they will) by the light of very early day. However striking be the repose of that hour, the want of welcome to a stranger, in the total cessation of life and

bustle, is chilling to the heart. Bodily weariness, and the reaction after much pleasant excitement, had of course their part, in the first nonchalant glance which I cast at the spacious old Palace, the Arsenal, Schinkel's far-famed Museum, and his square flaring *Bau Academie*. The last, built of a dull red brick, and traversed by pin stripes of lilac tiles, introduced on most original principles of concord, reminded me of a huge bale of one of those coarse and tawdry calicoes which are manufactured for the Mandingoe or Eboe market.

All pre-occupation apart, however, there is a certain coldness in the physiognomy of Berlin which never wholly passes away — morning, noon, or night; a frigid and academical splendour in the new edifices, which makes the eye long for a bit of dingy antiquity. Mine, at last, found a positive delight in resting on the group of corrupt and heavy oriels and bell-towers of the Palace, overhanging the water on the side of the Long Bridge. The mathematically straight, wide streets, lined with noble houses, are beautiful; — but it is the beauty of a set of regular

features without variety of expression, where Fancy has nothing to discover. The Linden, of course, is an exception: and still . . . . but, not to cavil, there are few things more splendid than that long avenue, closed by the magnificent Brandenburgh gate, with the masses of forest in the Thiergarten beyond, especially when seen by such brilliant and mellow moonlight as shone in September, 1839.

As I would fain not incur the charge of heresy and presumption, it is well that I have no intention to talk of styles, and columns, and capitals in my journal. The Prussian capital, in right of its modern Greek buildings, is the Mecca of many a German architect, — Munich being his Medina. Thus, too, it had been to me, musically, long a Holy City. While half dozing on my hard sofa, half watching the ceaseless gleaming of the fountain in the Lustgarten, I had dim dreams of Mara and Milder; — I remembered that Sontag had burst upon the world of her adorers from Berlin. I had been told in England wonderful things of Mademoiselle von Fassmann, who was now

the star of classical Opera. I had heard at every table from which I had eaten since I came into the country of the grace and consummate brilliancy of Mademoiselle Löwe. I anticipated the utmost orchestral and choral perfection, and hoped for "Iphigenia," or "Armida," or "Fidelio," or "La Vestale,"—to say nothing of such good new German operas as were worthy of metropolitan honours. Of course I called for a play-bill with my breakfast; and, in spite of fatigue and indisposition, it was with a leaping-up of delight and expectation which effectually charmed away fatigue, that I saw the announcement of "Der Freischutz," to be given that very evening at the Schauspiel Haus,—with the identical von Fassmann for the Agatha of the opera.

The morning was spent in a pleasant hurry of spirits;—in familiarising the eyes with the principal sights of the city, and in learning how heartily its inhabitants accredit letters of introduction. That day's dinner, too, was amusing: it furnished materials for a scene in an unwritten comedy of "Display." At mine host's

right hand sat Herr ——, the singer, calling for champagne at every mouthful, and boasting of his *bonnes fortunes* with a no less amazing prodigality. There was such an incurable twang of the stage Leporello, however, in every word of his gasconade, and in every name he announced, as to make his adventures at every listener's service amusing rather than offensive. Perhaps, my entertainment in the bustle he kept up was not lessened from observing how seriously he traversed the intentions of one of my dear countrymen, who was equally resolved to shine, but in another fashion. With him, it was all "my dinner with the Crown Prince," — "the day we spent with the King," — "my breakfast at Count Raczynski's,"— and "what I said to him about my own place in ——shire!" Never was greatness thrust upon a man more willingly shared with the public of the highways and hedges. Never was victim — like Mr. Lofty deprived of a single moment's breathing-time by the importunate claims of the great and the influential — more willing to tarry and (to quote the

American who misquoted Mr. R——'s lyric to the poet himself),

—— "*show his tale*
To every passing villager."

Not far off sate a less showy pair of contrasts: one was a middle-aged English gentlewoman, the civilest, most untravelled, most precise of single ladies who had ever come to Berlin to place a nephew at school. Sore bested was she with foreign usages, curtseying with a nervous dolefulness of expression when she entered the saloon — mistrusting every dish that was set before her, and, with almost tears in her eyes, recalling the wholesome roast and boiled of her own kitchen, as mess after mess of disguised vegetables passed round (the Telltower *ruben* — a notable Berlin delicacy—among the rest), or as sweets and savouries were shed on her neighbours' plates in strange admixture. There was a life's training under Chapone and Fordyce in her reserved acceptance of the courtesies of her cavalier and neighbour. He was a blithe, shrewd-faced, loquacious inhabitant of the town, who in very fair English expatiated

upon every use and custom, great and small, of German life and manners, till her poor head, I am sure, must have turned "quite round and back again!" Sancho, in Barataria, had not a worse time of it, under the restrictions of his physician, than the victim of my neighbour's civility among the meats and drinks of the Hotel de ——, which he pressed upon her, in spite of herself; and when, in the midst of an elaborate dissertation upon this and the other Professor's method (how far from the *Reading-made-easy* studies of her own scholastic experience!) he fairly took the good-natured freedom of jointing the leg of a pheasant on her plate with his own knife, the bewildered gratitude of her wintry smile, and her "O, dear sir!" "Thank you, sir!" was almost too much for any by-standing nerves to bear. The repast ended in the gentleman's insisting upon esquiring her to see Seydelmann *

* I have no pretensions to discuss the dramatic art as separate from Music. But I may not have another opportunity of alluding to Herr Seydelmann; and to sketch Art in Berlin at all, without mentioning this admirable actor, would be an absurd omission; the more so, since his name is not mentioned, as far as I recollect, by any of the

in Schiller's "Don Carlos!" She was to be shown every thing. No German ever leaves a sight unvisited: and this was one of the cases in which total ignorance of the language made but little difference. But, after this perplexing civility, the good lady seemed eager to escape,

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travellers and critics who have done so much to draw English attention to the theatre of modern Germany; — not even by that elegant and thoughtful writer, Mrs. Jameson. When I saw him first it was in a translation from the French, as Moliére the lover: and the perfection of his style as regards *finesse*, demeanour, and the power of saying every thing while saying nothing in the common conversational tone of society, made me so completly forget the difference of their languages that I wrote — "I would give any thing to see him with Mars." His Philip of Spain was described to me as no less Spanish than his Moliére was French; his Mephistopheles is, again, as thoroughly Pandemoniacal. In short he seemed to me the only German actor, among those I encountered, whom the schooling of attitude, gesture, and diction, to which the theatrical aspirants of the country laudably subject themselves, had led wholly to the desired result—the easy and vivid simulation of Nature, the life-like completeness of the figure, without a stray chisel-mark. I cannot remember a single point made — a single attitude indulged in: but I know that he *was* the being he set himself to personate, and not "Seydelmann in the part of ——."

I thought, as though by no means sure that further inflictions would not be attempted. I found that she had a tapestry frame in her own room; and, like a good work-woman, had bound herself to complete her task of so many square inches there every day!

The early dinner hour in Germany leaves a peculiarly profitless chasm of time before the early theatre. There are sociable coffee visits, to be sure, principally confined to the ladies, which may be paid; or, following a male Berlin fashion, one may drop into Kranzler's or Stehely's, to toss over the papers and to eat something; but, for a traveller's purposes, the afternoon thus spoiled is next to worthless. Energy itself cannot rummage libraries and look at pictures, when the heaviest meal of the day remains still undigested. So I sauntered up and down the Linden, which was as vacant of foot passengers as our own Bond Street of equipages in the month of September; peeped into Asher's to see what English books were most in request — finding, by way of reply, a heap of annuals new fledged in scarlet and gold — and read the

permitted dole of intelligence in the journal of the day — till it was time to be found in my *sperr-sitz* at the Schauspiel-haus. I had been forewarned at dinner that I was not to look for a very grand representation; many of the singers and half the orchestra were then at Potsdam with the camp, in attendance upon the grand autumnal review; and the opera was therefore given on a small scale in the smaller theatre. Still, to hear "Der Freischutz" in Germany was something. The sensation made by that work throughout Europe had excited one of my first musical yearnings; and the zeal with which I had trudged after barrel-organs in the streets, to catch up the Hunters' Chorus, and had risen at sunrise to pick out the waltz on the pianoforte, came back like feelings of yesterday. It chanced, too, that, save the overture and the great *scena* for the *soprano*,—which, after all, is hardly a concert song,—I had never heard any part of the opera decently performed. Therefore, having taken a hasty look round, and satisfied myself that the theatre (another of Schinkel's works) had a grand classical com-

fortless appearance, in spite of its limited scale; and that the two huge heads of Tragedy and Comedy, set like cameos half the height of the proscenium pillars, cut the perpendicular unpleasantly, I composed myself to enjoy the most delicious of all musical prologues to a faëry tale — more than I had ever enjoyed it before.

The overture began: I was at last hearing it played in Berlin style. Numbers may give tone, but they do not surely influence the intelligence of the conductor, communicated to his band. Nay, there are musical epicures who believe that the finest and most spiritual effects are incommunicable to large orchestras. The body of sound, too, was quite full enough for the size of the theatre. But *was* this Berlin style? Could it be that the quartett of horns in the introduction — music recalling the rich wood-scenery of some of Tieck's *märchen*— was allowed to plod through its work, with only the coarsest lights and shades *rubbed in*, as one says of a painter's sketch? Were my ears, or they, out of tune? I thought of Herr von Raumer's dic-

tatorial demolition of our London music, and the sneers lavished by him in his English and Italian journals on all performances save Berlin performances — on all singers save Berlin singers, — drew my breath, and listened again. It was past doubt — the horns *were* lazy and false. Greater disappointment I have not often felt; nor was the rest of the composition wrought up in a manner to re-assure me: the close, in particular, wanted firmness and animation. One does not go to Germany to hear people *play together;* and to say that the overture went correctly is tantamount to praising the Lancashire chorus singers for going through the "Hallelujah" of the "Messiah" without utterly breaking down. So largely, however, did I distrust my own impressions, that, had I not afterwards enjoyed the realisation of my *beau idéal* of German instrumental performance to the fullest completeness, and had many opportunities of confirming my judgment of the Berlin orchestra, I should have torn this page from my journal.

Yes, not only was the tone of the band

fatigued, rather than crisp or mellow; its execution was characterless and slovenly. Up went the handsome green curtain, with its classical devices, and the business of the stage began. The hero of the opera was Herr Eichberger,—the Caspar, Herr Blum,—the Kilian, Herr Mantius; the last highest in rank among the singers; yet, according to the sensible statutes of German management, taking a secondary part, and doing his best with it, without apparent condescension or reluctance.* Himself excepted, there was not a *solo* singer on the stage who did not sing with an impaired or inferior organ. Finish of style there was none, nor those traces of vocalisation which give the most wretched Italian artist a certain air, and a certain hold on the attention; and

* A friend of mine encountered *die grosse* Schröder (so the Germans delight to call their Siddons) behind the scenes of the theatre, one evening when "Romeo and Juliet" was to be given. She was dressed for her part. "How?" exclaimed he, in true English surprise, "*You* going to play '*Lady Capulet?*'" "I think it an honour," was her simple answer,—the answer of a true artist.

yet where has style a fairer opportunity for display — where a well-trained voice — than in the two *cantabiles* which relieve the great tenor *scena?* Blum's Caspar was rough and hearty — a touch too broad in its buffoonery; and this was all the more strongly obvious from the generally careless and somnolent tone of the performance. The enthusiasm of hope did not, however, quite forsake me till the second act had brought forward the favourite of the Berlin classicists, whose attitudes, —— had told me, the sculptor Rauch sends his pupils into the theatre to study. Let every one henceforward distrust a singer who is described by her attitudes — nay, and even an actress; for a succession of skilful arrangements of figure and drapery surely as little makes a personification as a collection of descriptive passages in verse constitutes a drama. But I had been too often provoked by the indifference of our vocalists to every thing save the show-off of the crude natural voice, to make the due distinction. On the stage Mademoiselle von Fassmann is a magnificent *blonde*, and when she arranges her hair

in rich Vandyke ringlets on either side of her face, seldom has a *blonde* presented a more effective appearance. Her voice must have been a powerful *soprano*, the natural toughness of which has never been wrought out of it by practice. In all passages of the least volubility she was totally inaudible, or so languidly heavy as to destroy every idea of time; but the purity and truth of her organ were already gone; the middle notes were false, the high notes, when forced, thick and harsh. It seemed as if in all passages of excitement or animation her physical powers became utterly extinct; and while her postures were separately graceful and picturesque, I could not but feel the total want of that electric warmth which would have made even an awkwardness welcome for the sake of a sudden burst of feeling. Musically speaking, her performance was bad; dramatically, elaborate and wearisome. The Annchen, Dlle. Galafres, was beneath dispraise. The audience was scanty and (no wonder!) sluggish. What a contrast between this and even my first night at the French Opera!

I was as much puzzled as disappointed. Se-

dulousness and care in performance had been, till then, believed in by me as an integral part of the musical creed of Germany. It could not be because "Der Freischutz" was a familiar work, and belonging to a class, the interest of which must exhaust itself in a limited period, that the orchestra played so disregardfully, and that the singers were so far behind the Brunswick corps in spirit and unity of purpose. Nor was it fair to my own star to believe I had stumbled on the worst night of the season. All that I afterwards heard and observed in Berlin — all that I have since learned concerning its in-comings and out-goings — furnished me with an explanation of my disappointment, which, right or wrong, comes too strongly before me not to be stated.

Berlin is notoriously the city of criticism — one must not say of pretension; for a Zelter has presided over its music — a Rahel (Madame Varnhagen von Ense) adorned its social circles — and such professors as a Waagen have been charged with the care and classification of its works of art. But when a critical spirit, from

analysing facts and principles, condescends to the care of persons and events, Temper and Pique are apt to have something to say as well as Judgment. So kindly do the inhabitants welcome strangers — so delightful (in spite of its touch of precision) is the tone of their society — intellectual without ostentation — that I cannot but wish they were kinder to each other. To pay a round of visits in Berlin is like dancing the egg dance, where at every step you are in danger of breaking a shell, and leaving a stain. If I asked, with a natural interest, about Madame von Arnim, whose published correspondence with Goethe gives her a claim to be numbered among the distinguished women of her country, a dozen voices made haste to assure me that her letters were no "Letters of a Child," and attacked her reputation with that weapon most odious to woman — a calendar of dates! Who ever thanked the Quarterly reviewer for disinterring the Lynn register that destroyed our belief in the early authorship of the delightful "Evelina?" If I praised the hospitable attentions of ——, I was chilled by

a direct "You go there? It is a hollow house." If I inquired in one quarter for Mendelssohn's music, a dry "Yes, he had talent as a boy," discouraged a second question. If I desired to know, in a second, which of Marschner's works were most in favour, "They perform none here," was the certain answer, and as certain a prelude to some story of cabal and quarrel, which it fatigued the heart to hear. If I wished to be told, in a third, what M. Leon de St. Lubin, who is or was a resident in Berlin, had done besides a pianoforte trio in G minor, and a quintett for stringed instruments, which made me desire to increase my knowledge of his music, I got, in return, the fact that he had played terribly out of tune when appearing at Leipsic as candidate for the leadership, now enjoyed and adorned by my friend David, — nothing more.* And if, in a fourth and last quarter, I expressed a natural curiosity con-

* Since my return, I have stumbled upon the titles of two operas, "Die Goldene Fisch" and "Kornblümchen," by this composer. It is vexatious that, even in Germany, one should know so many modern operas, belonging to names of promise, only by their titles.

cerning Spontini's later operas, which have never made their way past the Brandenburgh gate, — his "Nourmahal" and "Agnes von Hohenstauffen," for instance, — it was like pulling the string of a shower-bath charged with bitter waters, and drawing down a discharge of those nursery tales of which every great musician has in turn been made the hero. I was favoured with the name of the *real* composer of "La Vestale," — I was told how he had been disposed of. In every play-going house was an earnest partisan for Mademoiselle Löwe, or for Mademoiselle von Fassmann. Of this I had a curious proof one evening, when a German translation of Herold's "Pré aux Clercs" was performed, in which the rival queens appeared. The score (how could composer be so thoughtless?) makes their *entrati* succeed each other without pause. First came the Fassmann, attired as the Queen of France, in a splendid hunting costume of green velvet. She laboured through her song, in a manner which showed, beyond mistake, that French music was not within her circle of possibilities. Scarcely had

she finished, and received her round of applause from the classical party, — applause almost insulting, after the positive demerit of her performance, — when forth sailed the Löwe (I beg pardon for introducing her thus unceremoniously) in all the magnificence of her fine figure, brilliant arch black eyes, and captivating smile, — most wonderfully dressed. Ere she could open her mouth, — which, by the way, is usually in the first instance to utter some musical falsity, — an uproar of welcome broke from the French or fashionable party, which seemed to make her eyes sparkle brighter, and her form dilate to a nobler height. The Fassmann pressed her hand to her heart, gasped, turned red through her stage rouge, and did all but burst into tears. We heard the preliminary sob; this she swallowed down; but for the rest of the evening she was inaudible. — "Was ever any thing like the rage she is in?" cried one of the Löwe's adorers, whose *sperr-sitz* was next to mine. "Delicious!"

This theatrical feud was not the only public evidence I witnessed during my transient

glimpse of Berlin, which appeared to indicate that the world both of art and society there is traversed by a network of coterie influences, partizanships, objections, and reserves, so wide-spreading, as well as deep-rooted, as painfully to strike even a bird of passage. Nor is the character a new one. "Musical controversies in Berlin," says Burney, "have been carried on with more heat and animosity than elsewhere; indeed there are more critics and theorists in this city than practitioners, which has not, perhaps, either refined the taste or fed the fancy of the performers." Earlier even than the date of Burney's visit, "Berlin," writes Voltaire to Madame Denis, in the same letter which vaunts the beauties of the Opera House, and the noble execution of "Iphigenie en Aulide,"—"Berlin est un petit Paris. Il y a de la médisance, de la tracasserie, des jalousies d'auteurs, et jusqu'à des brochures." Times have changed proportions, I fancy; for I must add, that a reasonably intimate acquaintance for three years with the musical circles of the French metropolis has not disclosed to me the same amount of artistic disunion and

vexation of spirit, as three weeks of casual and superficial observation of Berlin.

A worse atmosphere for Art than this could not be imagined by its most malicious enemy. What avails putting Mrs. Grundy to the door, and opening it to Mrs. Candour? What avail freedom of motion, superior ease and unsuspiciousness in social intercourse, if a scandalising spirit be allowed to creep in, and if those who think the most deeply upon Art feel the most meanly concerning its petty precedences and honours, — for are not all precedences and honours petty when compared with the indwelling consciousness of being gifted for high things, — which is the only safe motive and sure solace of the artist? It will not do to dismiss the case with coarse and shallow sneers on the differences

" 'Twixt tweedle dum and tweedle dee ;"—

a squabble between a pair of common crowders, who care no more for their calling than its ministering to them a certain amount of gin and water, may be thus disposed of; but not a

disease which paralyses the energies of an eager and intelligent population like that of Berlin. I was talking on the subject with one of the most accomplished and acute observers I have known,— a German too,— and remarking how ill such a spirit of intrigue and evil-speaking in Art suited with the social geniality and absence of form in the manners of his countrymen. In England, I said, where Music was so long disproportionately considered a mere means of money-getting, one might, indeed, have looked for such narrowness of view; and yet I had never observed any thing at home in degree analogous to this. "No," was the simple answer, "it is not so with you in England; your very forms of society prevent it. Here, the universal necessity of their being laid aside, for any one who wishes to be thought a good neighbour, sometimes brings on hypocrisy; professions of regard and heartiness which are not felt; — and then, the comfort of raising the mask afterwards!"

I have had not a few visible demonstrations of the truth of this remark: one in particular

occurs to me — the scene was a supper-table at the principal hotel of no matter what Prussian town. The arrival of two of the most distinguished musicians in Europe was sure to be noised abroad in a few seconds; and, ere the soup was gone, a professional of the place made his appearance. Lean, bilious, conceited; — in an agony to look affectionate and to talk cleverly, dressed with a sort of pedagogic neatness — now he kissed one of the party — now he lavished splendid words and compliments on the other — hung on the words of both, and, with bowed head and clasped hands, received their news as oracles. Damon was not more enchanted to see Pythias. — This man had *only* stigmatised one of the two in print as presumptuous in his art; and on a public musical occasion been overruled by the other for a like fault!

But the comedy was not done. Enter next my old friend, the identical Leporello of the Hotel de ——, in a fuller bloom of success among the fair than ever. Enter, too, ——, about whose merits as an instrumentalist so much has been said and written. The two had been giving

concerts together. More sweet words from Herr Professor ——; more extravagant compliments to the last new-comers; more bland smiles at their great-boy play with each other, which had the desired effect of drawing the attention of the rest of the company upon them. Surely, if Charity lived any where on earth, it was in that good man's breast! The concert-giving pair rose to go. They were not upon the threshold when their panegyrist laid his lean hand eagerly upon ——'s shoulder, with a quick hungry look, which would set up *Sir Benjamin Backbite*, and leave something to spare for *Snake*, as he exclaimed, in a loud whisper, — "Well, well, my dear friend, *you* cannot like his playing, I am sure! Do tell me!"

If the artistic intercourse of Germany be crossed by frequent veins of insincerity like this, it accounts for many of the short-comings and deficiencies which, in the theatrical arrangements of musical Germany, for a while so entirely puzzled me, as occurring among a people at once so friendly in manner and so devoted to Art. I could give other anecdotes,

derived from my own personal experience, not less illustrative of the truth of my German friend's remark; but a single instance is enough — the smile they raise is one of bitterness. Beyond any general causes of disunion or egotism, there are particular conditions in the history of Berlin Opera, which, I think, have tended to bring about its present unsatisfactory decadence.

CHAP. II.

THE COURT AND THE OPERA.

The Opera House at Berlin. — Voltaire's Correspondence with Paris. — Frederic the Great a Patron of Art; — a Despot over Art. — Burney's Glimpses of the Berlin Opera.—Madame Mara.—Zelter's Anecdotes of her.—Genius and Despotism. — Frederic the Great's Taste in Music. — Royal Patronage. — German Opera hardly formed in the days of Frederic. — The National Theatre. — German Singers. — Madame Milder; a short Sketch of her. — Her Popularity in Berlin. — Her Traditions maintained there to this day.—Madame Schröder Devrient. — Hoffmann's "Undine."—Spontini and Zelter; — the latter criticises the former.— The Appearance of "Der Freischutz." — Melody and Elephants. — The Result of Weber's Successes nullified. — Gradual Deterioration of the Berlin Opera.

THOUGH a more oddly assorted quartett of authorities could hardly be picked out than Voltaire, Dr. Burney, Zelter, and the musical editor* of "The Atlas," — each of them gives his drachma or his mite of information to those

* The author of the "Ramble among the Musicians of Germany."

who seek the causes of the present state of Berlin Opera in its past history. From the philosopher-courtier, the friend of Johnson and Garrick, the worshipper of Goethe, and the pleasant man of modern art and letters, who mingles in his speculations the Hummels of Germany and the Hunts of Cockayne with a graceful and good-humoured individuality, we learn different parts of one and the same history.

But a little way up the Linden Strasse stands the magnificent Opera House, where all the splendours of the *French* lyric drama are exhibited under the nominal direction of M. le Chevalier Spontini. Though its interior decorations were faded when I saw it, it seems to me the handsomest and best proportioned theatre I have ever entered; large without vastness, and having that habitable look which is indispensable to the comfort of a place of public amusement, and, perhaps, unattainable in such a building as the Schauspiel Haus, where classical rigour of style is attempted. This is the identical theatre built by Knobersdorf, one of

the chamberlains of Frederic II., with the grandeur of which, in the first days of Voltaire's sojourn at the Prussian court, he delighted to pique his far-away enemies at Paris. Not a few also of his letters to his "*anges*," the Count and Countess D'Argental, and to Madame Denis, contain allusions to its splendours, among the other glories of Berlin. The tournament of 1750 was pronounced by him to be worthy of the brilliant age of Louis Quatorze * — the opera "Phaeton," to be more magnificently got up than any thing in those theatres of Paris which had so strong a hold on the

* "You would find it difficult," writes Voltaire to M. le Comte d'Argental, "on the delivery of Madame la Dauphine, to give a spectacle as noble and as gallant as that in preparation here ; —a tournament composed of four numerous *quadrilles* (battalions ?) of Carthaginians, Persians, Greeks, and Romans, headed by four princes, who will rival each other in their magnificence, to take place under an illumination of twenty thousand lamps, that will change night into day ; the prizes to be delivered by a lovely princess, before a crowd of strangers assembled to witness the spectacle. What is this but the age of Louis Quatorze revived again on the banks of the Spree ?"

philosopher's affections to his dying day, — the scene of the Palace of the Sun being beyond all admiration. Madame Astrua, the *prima donna*, had the best voice in Europe; and the music was very good. How should it be otherwise, when these pomps and splendours emanated directly from a King, "in every respect like Marcus Aurelius, save that Marcus Aurelius did not make verses, and that his prototype does, and excellent ones, when he gives himself the trouble of correcting them:"—a King (to quote from another *couleur de rose* letter of the same period) "who fights like Cæsar, thinks like Julian, *and gives me an income of twenty thousand livres, and honours also, for supping with him!*" Alas! could the last be the reason why Philosophy should extol valour and liberality in his royal pupil and flatterer? It seems so; and shortly afterwards the "*mais*," indicative of a sense of hollowness and dissatisfaction, which would even then creep into Voltaire's letters to Madame Denis, became an exception too potent to admit of his remaining any longer in so brilliant a court,

and under so peerless a sovereign. The King had begun to talk of "throwing away the orange as soon as he had squeezed it dry,"— the Mentor was become weary of "washing dirty linen"— so Voltaire contemptuously styled the literary assistance rendered by him to the Marcus Aurelius, who made verses, and was too royal to correct them. Nine years afterwards he was not ashamed to record his change of note yet more decidedly. The "Mémoires pour servir à la Vie de M. Voltaire" give us the thread ends and the coarse canvas of the tapestry with a vengeance! What availed the splendid Opera House,— its boxes supported by Caryatides,— if the sovereign who built it lorded it there after the fashion of a Tiberius? The panegyrist turned satirist informs us, that the King's favourite *danseuse*, La Barbarini, had been carried off from Venice by his soldiers, though anything but a Helen;— so depraved was the monarch's taste. And we are not told that the *quondam* Julian lavished upon this unworthy fancy a thousand *livres* of salary more than he had accorded to the "orange he had squeezed,"

and the " washer-*man* of his dirty linen" in the chaste retreats of Sans Souci,—till the bitterness of the reproach had been already secured by an earlier paragraph. For there we read, that the greatest of Kings showed little grace to his ancient favourites;—and only rewarded with a pension of seventy crowns the poor Madame Sbommers, his first love, who had played the harpsichord to his flute in his young days, and for her complaisance had been flogged by rough old Fritz, his father! Too much of the weakness of humanity is displayed in these humiliating exhibitions of spleen, to make us wish to linger with them, though they have a value and a bearing as regards the history of Opera in the Prussian metropolis.

Notices, however, yet more directly significant, are to be found concerning it in Dr. Burney's Journals. He visited Berlin, some twenty years after the reign of Voltaire, when the monarch, beginning to be a " little scant of breath," was harassed by the long passages of brilliant execution which Quantz had written to close the *solos* in his flute *concertos*. The

historian's musical eyes discerned that Art flourished in an ungenial fashion. It was bid to hold up its head and step out, in the straight lines of parade and form, just as the King pleased! — Music, in short, was under a military despotism. The King was at the whole expense of the opera; the public being then admitted *gratis;* and at six o'clock in the evening the monarch took his place in the pit, close to the orchestra, behind the *maestro di capella*, overlooking the score, and rebuking any of the singers who should chance to make a flourish, or change a note in the music. The poor humble vocalists! What could come of such cast-iron severity, but a monotonous baldness of execution? The orchestra consisted of fifty performers (two harpsichord players among the number): the singers were, Signora Agricola, wife of the composer, and fifty years of age; Signora Gasparini, a yet more ancient wonder, inasmuch as she was seventy-two years old; Signori Concialini and Porporino, and Mademoiselle Schmaling, afterwards *the* Mara.

What a pity it is that we have been de-

frauded of the memoirs of the life which that eminent songstress told Zelter, in 1829, that she was designing to write, though late in the day, for she was then eighty-one years of age! The personal incidents of her long artistic career must surely have been interesting in the hands of one who remained to the last, as her friend and panegyrist assures us, "characteristic, self-dependent, and peculiar." The memoir by Rochlitz, in his interesting work, "Für Freunde der Tonkunst," gives us a desire to know more; while the following passage from Zelter's correspondence to Goethe is too curiously connected with Royalty and Art in Berlin, not to be welcome, independently of its anecdotical value.

"She came hither," says Zelter, "in 1771, from Leipsic, as Mademoiselle Schmaling, and made her *début* in Hasse's 'Piramo e Thisbe,' at the same time with Concialini, — to the King's astonishment, who, at first, would hardly deign to hear her, as her paternal name sounded far too German for his ear. From that time to 1773, she sang here in the carnival operas 'Britannico,' 'Ifigenia,' 'Merope.' Then she

fell in love with Mara, a violoncellist, and favourite of Prince Henry the King's brother. As the two powers of course refused to sanction a marriage betwixt Berlin and Rheinsberg, Prince Henry's residence, the lovers absented themselves without leave. They were caught, and Mara was despatched to a regiment at Kustrin, where he was compelled to become a fifer. Mara returned to Berlin, and was allowed to marry her. From December, 1773, she sang as Madame Mara in the following carnival operas: 'Arminio,' 'Demofoonte,' 'Europa galante,' 'Partenope,' 'Attilio Regolo,' 'Orfeo,' 'Angelica e Medoro,' 'Cleofide,' 'Artemisia,' 'Rodelinda.' In 1779, in consequence of the Bavarian succession war, there was no carnival; and in the following year, 1780, the married couple secretly absented themselves for the second time.* Again they were arrested;

* The cause of this flight is by other historians ascribed to the following "passage:"—On leave of absence being denied to her when she wished to recruit her strength by a visit to the Bohemian *baden*, the songstress took the resolution of neglecting her professional duties, in the

but the King ordered they should be set free, to go where they liked; as he was anxious to get rid of Mara, even at so high a price. This we know from actual documents; but she, our

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hope of being allowed to depart as worthless. The Czarovitch, Paul the First of Russia, happened about that time to pay a visit to Berlin; and she was announced to appear in one of the grand parts. She pretended illness. The King sent her word, in the morning of the day, that she was to get well and sing her best. She became, of course, worse — could not leave her bed. Two hours before the opera began, a carriagé, escorted by eight soldiers, was at her door, and the captain of the company forced his way into her chamber, declaring that their orders were to bring her to the theatre, dead or alive. "You cannot; you see I am in bed." "That is of little consequence," said the obdurate machine; "we will take you, bed and all." There was nothing for it but to get up and go to the theatre, dress, and resolve to sing without the slightest taste or skill. And this Mara did. She kept her resolution for the whole of the first act, till a thought suddenly seized her that she might be punishing herself in giving the Grand-Duke of Russia a bad opinion of her powers. A *bravura* came; and she burst forth with all her brilliancy, in particular distinguishing herself by a miraculous shake, which she sustained and swelled and diminished with such wonderful art as to call down more applause than ever. Her disgust, however, at the transaction led, it is said, to a resolution to escape.

friend, will not confess any knowledge of it, and complains of violence having been exercised towards her." That her Berlin trammels had graven deep traces in her mind may be gathered from a trait noted in Zelter's letters of 1803: "Mara," says he, "is said to have signified, while in Dresden, her wish to exhibit for the entertainment of the Elector; but when she was informed that His Highness in general is pleased to eat while music is going on, she let it be understood that it would be impossible for her to sing while others are dining. This declaration has cost her a hundred ducats, and the Elector an *aria*." When she was in England she had so far followed the natural order by which those tyrannised over become in turn despotic, that, at Oxford, she walked, with all the grandeur of Rodelinda's self, out of the orchestra, rather than stand up while "the Hallelujah Chorus" was performed.

The rest of this curious and genuine fragment of biography has its value as further illustrating the state of art and patronage in Berlin.

"Mara," continues Zelter, "had become an object of the most universal enthusiasm ever since the performance of the opera 'Britannico,'* in which, as Agrippina, she sang behind the scenes the aria 'Mi paventi il figlio indegno!' with a voice of tremendous power, and yet with a maternal pathos that forced bitter tears from my eyes every time I heard her. The piece is a regular *bravura* air, and such as was the fashion in those days: it was as if a thousand nightingales were straining their throats to warble for revenge.—In all tragic parts she seemed to rise a head taller than usual. I never beheld any thing grander than her Queen Rodelinda. Connoisseurs censured her for want of action in passionate parts. 'What!' she used to exclaim, 'am I to sing with my hands and legs? I am a singer; and what I cannot do with my voice, I will not do at all.'

"The relation of such a being to her husband

* By Graun, who wrote, be it noted, Italian operas for the gratification of the royal ear. This very *bravura* it is which has recently been revived by Mademoiselle Löwe with such success in Berlin.

was a general subject of compassion. Mara in Rheinsberg abused the Prince's favour in the most gross and public manner. As it was a rarity to hear him play, the Prince had on one occasion, at carnival time, being then at Berlin with his whole suite, and eclipsing with his entertainments the royal *redoutes*, invited the court to hear the incomparable Mara perform. All came but the King, and one other, who was also missing, — namely, Mara himself. At last they dragged him in. He was drunk, and refused before the whole court, in spite of the entreaties of his patron, to play; so that the Prince could not but feel himself publicly compromised. The King regarded the insult as a species of high treason against his consort, who was present; and this was considered to be the cause of his severity on the occasion of Mara's first desertion. . . . . There were many other causes. The fine residence of Rheinsberg, near the frontier of Mecklenburg, was a nest of smugglers, whom no one dared to oppose that loved his life, while they were under the protection of the favourite. But the King knew

very well where the contraband clue was fastened, which extended, by the aid of the court equipages, from Rheinsberg to Berlin. Mara closed his existence here in the most abandoned debauchery, although his wife never wholly forsook him. I once expressed to her my surprise at the generosity of her conduct towards him, when she replied, 'But you must at least allow that he was the handsomest man ever seen!' — Reichardt, too, had continual quarrels with him, because he would meddle with the Royal Opera. The King, for one whole carnival, sent Mara to sleep in the guard-house on the hard boards; where the common soldiers were allowed to play the roughest tricks with him. This nettled Reichardt; and therefore, as a young patronising *kapellmeister*, he wrote a long story to the King on the treatment of old musicians. On this the King remarked, 'I thought I should have thrown the trouble of the opera off my shoulders; and now I have the old plague again, with the addition of one fool more into the bargain.'"

How far "the old plague" complained of was the consequence of mistake and egotism, it

were not altogether a loss of time to examine. In Burney's time, at least, the Philosopher-king was abundantly narrow in the choice of his music. The only operas permitted to be given were by Graun, Agricola, and Hasse; and even by the last composer very few. Occasionally His Majesty chose to write a score himself, which, to judge from the manuscript of "Il Re Pastore," and certain marches recently discovered at Berlin, appears to have consisted in his vouchsafing to scratch down a few melodies upon the ruled paper: noting down his notions of the manner in which they should be completed for Quantz, his musical washer-*man*, to fill up. The latter, however, seems to have kept the peace, and yet gone his own way; for we find that he was independent enough to dare in one composition to give *an upward motion* to certain orchestral parts, in spite of the monarch's pencilled injunction — "Let them descend." "Upon the whole," concludes the judicious Burney, "my expectations from Berlin were not quite answered, as I did not find that the style of composition, or manner of execution,

to which his Prussian Majesty has attached himself, fulfilled my ideas of perfection." What good, indeed, to the free mind of Art could result from such narrow patronage? What good from the three flute concertos played nightly by the royal *virtuoso* at his private concerts, until the loss of his front teeth destroyed the possibility of further trespass upon the patience of the obsequious court; and the King, as Burney tells us in his 'History of Music,' ceased, therefore, to "take further pleasure in the art!" The manner, indeed, resulting from such paralysing support, or, to call things by their right names, interference, could hardly fail to be what Burney declares it was — mechanical and devoid of sensibility. The King's musical presidency, it is needless to point out, tended to a systematic and resolute discouragement in composition of all those national characteristics out of which a style is made. His liberty of conscience meant prejudice against all things grave and ecclesiastical; when he heard of any composer having written an anthem or oratorio, the Philosopher fancied his taste was contaminated by it, and

would say of his other productions, — "*O! this smells of the church!*" He would be French in his opinions — Italian in his ears, and, between the two, German Art, the spirit of which is Belief, and the musical expression uttered in harmony more than in melody, stood but a poor chance. The natural stuff of his countrymen is too robust and solid in texture to take the colour with which he resolved to dye it; and hence, in place of displaying that vitality and creative power which we have a right to expect in a great metropolis, the Opera of Berlin was, under the auspices of Frederic II., a formal state machine, as innocent of the warmth of real life or the poetry of enjoyment as are the bespoken dithyrambics of a laureate, or the restricted festivities of a diplomatic circle.

For such royal patrons I have often thought that the fittest musical amusement would be the monster snuff-box playing the few chosen tunes, or the puppet-show of the Great Mogul on his throne with a band to be wound up at pleasure, which the Dinglingers or Maelzels of mechanical invention can construct. It is of little matter

whether the romantic or the classical or the frivolous predominates in the composition of him who prefers possessing in Art a puppet which can be manœuvred at pleasure, in place of a free and grateful creature, constrained only by love and cherishing to exercise spontaneously the noble powers of creation. A King should not make of Music either his drill-serjeant, or his fool, or his paramour, lest his people too become towards her tyrannical, or absurdly tolerant, or licentious. The best patronage which those who sit in high places can bestow on the works of Genius is by practising the hardest lesson they have to learn—the sacrifice of their own whims and fancies. All honour to King Louis of Bavaria, then, who, in planning his magnificent palace of Munich, desired his architect to build it not merely for himself, but for his children, and for his children's children. Even Louis of France, who cared for little, Heaven knows! beyond the circumference of his ambrosial *perruque* and his velvet mantle covered with *fleur de lis*, was, musically to speak, a better King for the French nation, when providing in L'Académie Royale for all those na-

tural tastes and impulses of his subjects out of which styles and schools proceed, than the redoubtable Frederic, when endeavouring in his superb Opera House to feed the German people with French superficialities and Italian airs and graces.

Still, while we remark how the brilliant and philosophical King not only threw back his country's music, but, by the abiding popularity gained for his name, made a false taste, as it were, sacred, and to some degree perpetual in his metropolis,—it is just, too, to observe, that German Opera had shown few signs of a will or way of its own before the time when Frederic the Great was called away from his piping and patronising of Art to his hard and unadorned tomb in the Garnison Kirche at Potsdam, whence Napoleon carried off his sword. Gluck's operas, it is true, might have startled him out of his despotic exclusiveness, and he might have hastened to adopt them in the fulness of his Gallomania, seeing that their most brilliant successes were gained in Paris rather than in Vienna; but he loved Italian singers, and these could

not abide Gluck's music. At that period, too, Mozart had only just begun to give the world those marvellous compromises where Italian *cantilena* and German harmony combined, to the enchantment of all civilised musical ears. The fame of the Great King, and the love borne to his memory, may, after all, be more largely chargeable with the exotic tendencies of the Royal Opera in Berlin, than his own despotic management and short-sighted tastes. Be this as it may, the national lyric drama, when it began to take a shape and form of its own, was rather for the people than for the court, being performed at the National Theatre. There, however, the arrival of Iffland in 1796 as manager, and his distinction as actor no less than dramatist, contributed to make the soil as little genial to musical growth as the scene of Weber's first triumphs in "Oberon" became with us under the admirable dramatic management of Mr. Macready. Nevertheless, Himmel's "Fanchon" managed to struggle into life, and to circulate thence from Berlin throughout Germany. It is now forgotten: forgotten,

too, is the "Donauweibchen" of Kauer — in its day a universal favourite; and the merry operas of Dittersdorf. To these slighter works the court can hardly be blamed for preferring the *buffo* music of Italy, executed by Italian singers. Yet in the executive department of Opera, too, Germany was becoming richer. In the catalogue of popular operatic celebrities at Berlin, — to turn over which makes one half-melancholy, the mime and the musician being among the most signal illustrations of Fame's transiency that the world possesses, — we shall find such names as "die schöne Baranius," "die Döbbelin," celebrated for her performance in Naumann's "Cora;" "die Unzelmann," praised by Zelter for her agreeable singing and acting in "Die verwandelten Weiber;" "die Schick," and "die Bethmann;" the last, from a pretty singer, having ripened into a great actress; while at the court theatre, Fischer the elder was a *basso* sufficiently excellent to have parts written expressly for him.

Ere Fischer appeared, Reichardt had passed away, who, in 1775, succeeded Graun as *kapell-*

meister, and is described to have mounted the Italian opera in a very splendid manner, after the death of Frederic the Great. Reichardt was in turn succeeded by Righini, an Italian, and who composed many works ; not, however, more Italian in their style than the operas of the Winters and Naumanns, who chose any writer rather than Gluck as their model. This timid want of nationality among the German composers may probably have told favourably upon the German vocalists. By this time, too, the delicious works of Mozart were at hand, forming a point of universal union, simultaneously satisfying the taste of the court and of all who loved such melodies as could flow sweetly from *la bocca Romana*, and the more muscular desires of a people who were increasingly earnest to find thoughts rather than sounds in Music.

The early period of the present century, then, seems to have been a time of progress and enjoyment for Opera in Berlin. The court and the people, while their tastes kept asunder, were gradually influencing each other, — these to the improvement of the singer, those to the in-

creased nationality of the composer. An untoward fate, however, seems to have pursued German Opera. Mozart died at the moment when he was attaining to a true knowledge of its capabilities; Beethoven's melancholy infirmity, and the disappointments which attended the production of his "Fidelio," limited his stage contributions to that one drama. At the moment, however, when the national repertory of new master-works was in danger of being exhausted, and the national taste of composers, hardly sufficiently assured, ran some danger of being lost among the Italian melodies rather than the German harmonies of Mozart, the evil day was averted at Berlin by the appearance and triumphs of Madame Milder in 1812. For many subsequent years her acting and singing illustrate the golden period to which all those devoted to German Opera enthusiastically recur. They triumphed, at all events, for a time, above the flimsy court predilections for foreign aid and talent, by which the taste of Frederic the Great — even now represented in a diluted form — has always hindered the national music

of Germany from thriving kindly on the stage of its northern metropolis.

This celebrated songstress was, according to Fétis, born in the year 1785, at Constantinople, where her father, a courier belonging to the Austrian court, was upon a mission. Her musical and dramatic endowments, — a voice which has been universally described to me as magnificent, the fullest and richest of *sopranos*,—and a person which ripened into a rare stateliness, early attracted the attention of M. Shikaneder, the same Vienna manager for whom the "Zauberflöte" was composed, and who wrote its incomprehensible *libretto*. He placed her under an Italian singing-master, and superintended her appearance on the stage. But she was *a voice* and an actress of Nature's making; for so inflexible was her organ, or so indifferently cultivated, as to be incapable of the slightest trill or embellishment; and though Mrs. Jameson says that "this magnificent creature never would sing any other than German music," the truth is, that she *could* not. She was, in addition to this, so indifferent a musician, as to learn every

part only by having it played again and again to her. But for that, she might have been accepted implicitly as the type of the great German songstress; because the incomparable "Fidelio" was written for her, and also the part of Emeline in Weigl's somewhat lachrymose "Die Schweitzer Familie." It was for her, too, I believe, that the operas of Gluck were revived, which make so brilliant a point of retrospect in the history of Berlin Opera, and still form its best and most satisfactory feature. It may be fantastic to presume that the Greek blood which some say ran in her veins had any part, conjointly with the heaviness of her voice, in prompting her to assume the lyrical cothurnus in those splendid dramas; but certain it is, that they were her greatest triumphs. In later years she took the fancy of singing such parts as Mozart's Donna Elvira and Susanna; but even this music was too slight and figurative for her to succeed in.

How completely Madame Milder satisfied a national desire, in spite of all these technical deficiencies, and the drawback of a manner

in society which has been described to me as indolent and frigid even to the unamiable point*, may be gathered from the rapture which she excited — not merely in the court — not merely in the public — but in grave composers and tough German critics. So much

* I have been told that Milder was restrained and ungracious towards children; in this how different from our own stately Mrs. Siddons, who was more than once found, as one of her biographers tells us, "with her magnificent hair let down, playing with a little child, and telling it faëry tales!" A friend of mine, who remembers Milder's reserve, but remembers too her magnificent impersonation of the heroines of Gluck at Berlin, in the years 1818, 1819, was present at a whimsical scene in one of these performances. At the moment when Blum, the bass singer, who used to strengthen himself for the part of Hercules upon champagne, was carrying off the colossal Alcestis from the shades below, singing the while "Dem Orkus zum Hohn, raub ich ihm seine Beute" "In defiance of Orcus, I rob him of his prey,"— Queen Milder, aware of the risk she ran in arms so unsteady, and overpowered with sudden terror, exclaimed, "Herr J——! Ich falle!" This exclamation, than which the wife of Noah's invocation "to the Father and swete St. John," in the old Mystery, was hardly more curiously inappropriate, elicited a simultaneous roar from all parts of the theatre. And from that day forward Milder was *led*, not carried, from the stage by the God of Strength.

for the triumph of Nature! On her first visit to Berlin in 1812, "The voice, countenance, and manner of this young lady," writes Zelter, "have a power, grace, and freedom, especially in the part of Emeline, such as we have not witnessed here for a long time. Her singing has been blamed as unscientific; but I find much to praise in it — warmth, truth, connexion, certainty; and a kind of Swiss plainness which is displayed in the most innocent manner in the world. At least I have never seen passion represented with such moderation and decided effect." Three years later we find the same writer (by no means a blind and bigoted lover of German singers) lauding her golden voice as "positively belonging to the class of rarities," and herself as "the only singer who gives you entire satisfaction." So popular became this stately enchantress in Berlin, that she settled finally there, till made willing to yield her throne in consequence of misunderstandings with Spontini. Her picture is in every musical house I entered. She must have been a gorgeous-looking woman — the very

Alcestis and Iphigenia of Gluck in her majesty of attitude and the sublime repose of her features; and so entirely did she impress her own statutes upon her subjects, the public, as things not to be departed from, that I have been told that when Madame Schröder Devrient came to Berlin, and presumed to *costume* some of the classical characters with less munificence of veil and drapery and more liberality of arm and bosom than her predecessor, it was as distasteful to the rigid Berlin critics as a yard-long Rubini-warble thrust into the midst of "Total Eclipse" would be to the frequenters of the Ancient Concerts. Nay, by a touch of royal despotism, inherited from him who sent his soldiers to fetch him la Barbarini, her unclassicality cost her an engagement. Only last autumn, when I saw Mademoiselle von Fassmann, to my ignorant eye absolutely overladen with veil and diadem, and chaplet and stole, in "Iphigenie," and remarked to some one on the impolicy of such a disproportionate quantity of drapery, I was answered — and the answer was considered to be final — "Milder dressed it so."

While the Milder was thus possessing the public of the Court-Opera with her classical traditions, the National Theatre was making a step in the advancement of German Opera towards one of its most brilliant periods. This was by the production of Hoffmann's "Undine," in 1816.

The name of this singular man is best known in England by those terrible or fascinating tales, in which Imagination, while walking on the bounds of Madness, still keeps so strong a hold of probability and natural feeling that the reader hardly knows, on laying down the book, which is real — the dream he has been perusing, or the life to which he is returning. Every chamber of imagery, to which creative power has resort, lay open to Hoffmann. He was a draughtsman, as well as a novelist and musician; had tried many professions, and proved many vicissitudes; and hence the marvellous versatility of illustration by the spell of which his tales, if they fail of catching the reader in one paragraph, cannot but lay hold of him in the next; — since, in their wildest vagaries,

some homely domestic picture, or some feeling we have all of us felt, steals in so imperceptibly yet so familiarly as to make its *entourage* forgotten. From such a man one might have expected nothing less than night-mare music; but these reasonings by analogy are as often confuted as confirmed by fact. Harlequin, because he bounds lightly on the stage is not always a good runner on a race-course: — wits in talk have proved very dull men in comic authorship. There was a touch of the faëry and goblin spirit of his tales in his choice of La Motte Fouque's novel; but little in his music, if we are to believe Herr Truhn, from whose contribution to "Der Freihafen" for 1839 I derive the notice of Hoffmann as a musician.* "Whoever opens a score of Hoff-

* During the period of Hoffmann's musical career, which included a directorship at Bamberg and another at Dresden, — a career only entered on somewhere about his thirtieth year, when the war of 1806 had driven him from his *Rath*-ship in Prussian Poland, — he tried every form of composition. He has left behind him operas, ballets, a Miserere, a Mass, a Symphony, a piano-forte trio, sonatas for the same instrument, and several vocal compositions. Taken in conjunction with his stories, the number of his utterances seems, by this catalogue,

mann's," says he, "with the expectation of meeting in sound all that world of *diablerie* and phantasm which the celebrated author of the 'Phantasie Stücke' had entirely made his own, will be considerably disappointed. His music has no where that unearthly wildness which pervades the romantic operas of Weber, Marschner, Lindpaintner, and the gloomy ballads of Löwe and others: on the contrary, it is composed after such classical models as Mozart and Cherubini; and, like their works, dwells in the genuine musical region of sweetness of sound and beauty of form. Even in the music he composed for Werner's tragedy, 'Das Kreuz an der Ostsee,' where he might have embodied all the terrors of the aboriginal forests and their heathen inhabitants, the Scythian rhythms of Gluck, in the 'Iphigenia in Tauris,' served him as a model." Yet, somewhat to mitigate

to have been extraordinary. Perhaps he possessed the most feverish spirit of all those universally gifted men, of all countries, who fill such a strange and interesting chamber in the gallery of artists; to some of whom, time and encouragement permitting, I may return on a future day.

the impression of insipidity or want of enterprise which such a character is calculated to convey, we are told by the same authority that the music for the parts of Undine and her uncle Kühleborn the water-sprite is mysterious and characteristic; that the heroine's songs are for the most part accompanied by the violoncello, whence such a manner of colouring as Weber afterwards perfected appears to be indicated — to say nothing of several wind-instrument effects no less novel and romantic. A happier story for a romantic opera than "Undine" could hardly be met with; and the success of Hoffmann's music was great — the work having been performed twenty-three times before the National Theatre of Berlin was burnt down. Since that time it has not been played any where, — partly owing to the expensive decorations required — those in Berlin cost twelve thousand *thalers*, — partly owing to a rumour, that the score had perished in the flames, which was spread abroad. This the composer, who had betaken himself to his fantastic world of Fiction, cared little to contradict. He may have felt its want of that decided

musical merit which, at least in Germany, is required of a work destined to live and circulate on its strangely narrowed and encumbered stage. The score, however, is about to be published; and perhaps the Prussian powers that be will one day esteem its revival worth at least as much trouble and expense, for the sake of Fatherland, as they bestowed upon the production of Auber's weakest work, "Le Lac des Fées," on the occasion of the national festival, the "Huldigung," in 1840.

Neither the strong influences which Queen Milder exercised and still exercises on the stage of the Berlin Opera, nor the production at the second theatre of a work so attractive as "Undine" is said to have been, could break the court habits of taste and preference. The limited extent of the genuine German repertory, and the all-pervading intoxications of Rossini, which, for the time, were strong enough to seduce Beethoven's own townsmen from their allegiance, might have something to do with this. How shall we wonder, when, at home, English music and English musicians

are well nigh prejudged among English grandees as contemptuously as Mademoiselle Schmaling was by Frederic the Great in his less enlightened days? There were no other new works in the artistic mart so likely to fit a Grand German Theatre Royal, not vowed to its own country, and yet not wholly Italian, as "La Vestale" and "Fernand Cortez;" and accordingly Signor Spontini was invested with the *baton* of operatic sovereignty at Berlin, which he still continues to wield; — with what success and benefit to the city which received him, the present stormy and unworthy controversies now pending unhappily declare too emphatically. It would seem as if every bar of his music was like that *Raug* or magical tune which the Hindoos believe is a certain bringer on of storms, clouds, and earthquakes!

Before Spontini's appointment took place, however, Berlin art, as well as Berlin literature, had, among the people, in a great measure thrown off the French stays into which Frederic the Great had forced it. The people of the town had found a natural develop-

ment of their own strongly-marked musical tastes in the Sing-Académie founded by Fasch and perfected by Zelter.* There had been

* Zelter's catholicity and fairness as a critic is not more signally displayed in any passages of his letters than in those relating to Spontini's operas. As illustrative of the history of the Theatre of the Caryatides in Berlin, I must give one or two; the chapter being already professional beyond redemption for the unmusical reader: —

"*Berlin, June* 1820. Spontini has just got his last opera translated into German. He requires for this work forty violinists in the band (not more than half the number being there already), and an enlargement of the space for the orchestra in the Opera House. If the rest of the instruments be increased in proportion, the people in the *parterre* may look for places outside the doors. For my part, I shall not fail to derive some good from observing the experiment, although I plainly see how and where it must end, if the grain which is wrapped in all these folds is ever to be found. . . . .

"*July*, 1820. I have heard Spontini's 'Cortes' twice. The poem is by De Jouy, and much better than the very bad German version which is substituted here. I am disposed to prefer the music to that of 'La Vestale,' but must hear it once or twice again, as I have gained a kind of general view of the whole, but as yet no fixed point of observation. Single portions are, in reality, admirable; and the dances throughout are good, and full of genius. But what has hitherto confounded me, is to see that an Italian of great natural powers, habituated to great

also growing up a sound instrumental amateurship, which can never flourish without patience,

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effects, should adapt to great heroical subjects such petty melodic forms, which seem the more unaccountable from being, as regards the instrumental accompaniment, most heavily overlaid. . . .

"*June*, 1825. I have twice sat through our new twenty-stone-weight opera, 'Alcidor,' by Spontini, which takes four hours in the performance. The music is a work of almost miraculous labour; one must be a thorough musician even to appreciate its amount with the proper measure of astonishment. It is a chaos of the rarest effects, which seem to be striving each to destroy the other, like the singing princes that appear in it, and imply immeasurable diligence in the composer. There is the toil of ten years in the work; and I might fret myself to bits, and still be unable to produce any thing like it. The current criticisms are not just to the author; they either condemn the work, or extol it with cold approbation. He has succeeded only too well in what he intended to do: he wished to excite wonder,— to amaze; and with me he has fully accomplished his object. To me he appears like the Gold King in the story, who breaks people's heads with lumps of gold. As musical execution now depends for its success on *ex*cess, the greatest demands upon it are not unreasonable; and the complaints of the people in the orchestra of its difficulty, are a mere nothing to what the ear has to endure in dwelling so long in a labyrinth of sounds, which are at once too attractive and too oppressive to escape from. I have no such power of en-

knowledge, and experience,— all, in short, that predisposes its maintainers to a deeper music than Italian vocalism or French conventionalism. It was unlucky for Spontini that the "Olimpia," the first of his new compositions produced after his appointment, should fall so far behind his earlier operas, where there is more of solidity and less of sound. The obstinate frequenters of the Sing-Académie, — the amateurs who had taken part in one or other Liedertafel society long enough to find how the national heart beat,— who had not in vain listened to the

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durance, and thought that yesterday I should come off more easily; but to-day I still ache all over; eyes and ears, yea, my very skin and bones, are sore with much seeing, and hearing, and sitting. All this is not to be laid to the door of the composer in particular; it belongs to the *time*, which hurries every one to destruction who cannot help being carried away by it. In short, the work is, in all externals, a very remarkable one, on account of the exaggeration of style carried to the utmost pitch, exhibiting power and beauty in *travestie*, and in its real hollowness, producing a confusing — nay, an annihilating effect. The parts intended to be melodious seem to me like an outline drawing, in which the contours are perpetually breaking off instead of flowing, and thus wander into caricature."

exquisite quartett-playing which so many private Berlin circles afford almost as liberally as knitting-needles and tapestry-frames to the ladies, and cakes to the world of both sexes,—resented this foreign domination. Though they ran to see the gorgeous spectacle, the elephants the size of life and the other stage splendours called forth for the inauguration of the new *kapellmeister*,—they criticised him searchingly in the true Berlin fashion; and only waited the moment and the man to declare themselves openly.

The moment and the man arrived in the year 1822, on the occasion of the opening of the New Schauspiel-haus, and the bursting into day of Weber's "Der Freischutz," then and there represented for the first time. "It came upon us," writes one to whose warrant this sketch is largely indebted for its historical tone, "like sunshine and unexpected good news. There had been no puffing and very little talk about it. From the first notes of the overture to the last of the *finale*, it was a brilliant triumph; and not merely for the author, but for all true Germans. When

Weber was called for at the conclusion of the opera, and showers of garlands were rained upon him from all parts of the house, there came down also numberless copies of a poem in which he was praised as the man who *gave us music instead of elephants.* The opera was admirably performed. Madame Seidler was the loveliest Agatha one could see. It was popular — I mean in the very streets — as soon as brought out; even difficult portions, like the first air of Caspar, being heard every where. When I paid a visit to Weber at Dresden, six months later; — in his half-modest, half-ironical way, he raised his hand to the top of the looking-glass in his drawing-room, which was overhung with laurel garlands, and said quietly —'Die hat mir alle Der Freischutz eingebracht.' (All this has Der Freischutz brought me.) The work had then been performed every where throughout Germany."

And this very opera was the one I heard massacred with such carelessness in the very Schauspiel-haus where it had first appeared! Had the performance taken place under one

of our own theatrical managements, I should not have ventured to assume its mediocrity as typical or significant of the general style; but we have learned, since the days of our musical nonage, to look to Germany as the head-quarters of zeal and completeness; and the Berlin Opera is directly under the patronage of the state. There ought, in such an establishment, to be no bad days — no blanks — no chasms. Inquiry, not confined to Berlin sources, gave me some intelligible reasons for the soreness felt by the musical public of the Prussian metropolis, on seeing their theatre possessed by a stranger; — and patronised most largely by a court, when it was given over to the comic opera of the French, or the *roulades* of the Italians; — a court which, in its disregard of national genius, could plead the example of the great Frederic himself. Since the days of Milder's departure, and the triumphs of "Der Freischutz," it was universally agreed that the general style of theatrical singing in Berlin had become less and less excellent; that voice after voice had been destroyed, and artist

after artist alienated; while the composers of the country, ill-paid, coldly received, and indifferently treated, gradually shrunk off to their own nooks and corners, there to nurse the hope long deferred, and the irritation so hard to repress, which would be reproduced in the form of humours and crotchets on the part of the active, and of a sullen indolence on those more phlegmatically organised. Fourteen years ago, when the agreeable author of the "Ramble among the Musicians in Germany" was at Berlin, the parts taken by Milder in Gluck's operas were given to Mademoiselle Schechner. She, however, was only a passing stranger; and, though an excellent voice and a fine actress, was still one of those whose appearance, however welcome, leaves no traces on the progress of her art. The Sontag, too, was then in full bloom at the Königstadtisches Theater, but her immeasurable brilliancy led her shortly afterwards to devote herself to the Italian stage. Those times, also, are gone. As regards classical opera in Berlin, the age of lead has come on. The Fassmann, as I saw her, was a weary

distance below the Schechner as she had been described to me. Every visit to the Berlin Opera left me more chilled and more disheartened than the last. And yet, if I was unlucky in the great music of the country, I ought (according to north German taste) to have rated myself as the most fortunate Cœlebs who ever travelled forth in search of music, from the frequent opportunites I had of making acquaintance with Sontag's successor, — as the Löwe's friends were pleased to style her. But of her, and the exotic operas I heard, in another chapter.

CHAP. III.

SPECIMENS OF GERMAN NATIONALITY. — THE LÖWE.

The French Operas I heard. — The Pound of Tea across the Border. — Mademoiselle Löwe. — Her Cadences, — her Demeanour, — her Popularity, — her Magnificence of Costume. — Mademoiselle Grünbaum. — The Konigstadtisches Theater. — "Der Bauer als Millionair." — German Humour. — German Opera Books addicted to the Supernatural and the Monstrous. — Specimen of their Subjects. — The Piper of Hameln. — Gläser's Music. — The Hybrid School. — Lortzing's Operas. — Weber's slighter Music contrasted with this. — Truth to Nature an Element of his Style. — Wants of Opera in Germany.

"You must wait for our grand operas till the review is over, when the court comes back from Potsdam, and the orchestra is in full *force*," was the unanimous answer of every one to my complaint against the weak and languid performance of "Der Freischutz:" — "they do some of Gluck's very magnificently; and Spontini's 'La Vestale' and 'Fernand Cortez.'" "And which of Marschner's?" — "None." "And

Weber's 'Euryanthe?'" — "Very rarely:" and out came the hundredth tale of cabal and court predilection. I might as well, from all I heard, in indulgence of my intense curiosity as to antique German Opera, have bespoken "La Costanza e Fortezza," — the composition by Fux, performed in the open air at Prague one hundred and twenty years ago, on the coronation of Charles VII. as King of Bohemia; which Quantz described to Dr. Burney as being in the old church style, coarse and dry, but at the same time "grand," and as having "a better effect perhaps with so immense a band*, and in such an immense space, than could have been produced by more delicate compositions."

But the visitor to Berlin, however rational

* "This opera was performed by a hundred voices and a hundred instruments. There was not an indifferent singer among the principal performers, all of whom were of the first class. Among the six male singers, Carestini is perhaps the name best known. The female singers were the two sisters Amberville. The choruses were in the French style, and served for dances; and it was upon the singing in this opera that Benda formed his style."— See *Burney's Present State of Music in Germany*, vol. ii. p. 177, 178.

in his operatic expectations, would stand but a poor chance of his wishes being fulfilled. As regards the slighter national works of the day,—such operas, I mean, as Gläser, and Lortzing, and Conradin Kreutzer pour out with a fecundity which speaks well for their perseverance at least,—I suspect I might have waited for the return of King Sebastian, before I should have been treated to any thing of the kind at the Grand Opera. That its managers, however, do not disdain works flimsy in structure, and unambitious in scale, I had proof in the operas which I did hear in Berlin. These were —

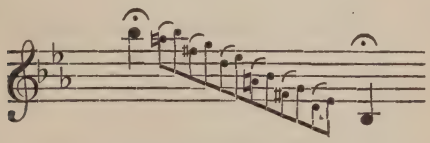
"Le Postillon de Longjumeau"	*Adam.*
"Le Maçon" - - -	*Auber.*
"Le Pré aux Clercs" - -	*Herold.*
"Le Domino Noir" - -	*Auber.*

What has been said of the "Guido and Ginevra" at Brunswick, applies, I think, even in fuller force to these pretty trifles, as regards their effect when translated from French to German.

Every one has been told the fate of the first pound of tea that ever crossed the Border: how

the good Scottish lady to whom the delicacy was intrusted had it cooked and served up like a vegetable, to the extreme disappointment of her guests, who found the far-famed delicacy "nothing so wonderful after all." Little better treated than this unlucky Hyson or Bohea is the Comic Opera of France, as far as I am acquainted with the result of German attempts to naturalise it. Though more generally relished in Germany than it has been with us in England, — where, indeed, it has been thoroughly disguised under an intolerable grossness of condiment, when not utterly changed past recognition by a destruction of its distinctive taste and texture, — the real *aroma* is not the less lost. And yet, as performed in Berlin, when I heard them, the French comic operas had every advantage which Germany could give them — royal patronage, and a company well fitted for their representation, difference of clime and language considered. In three of the works here enumerated, the *prima donna* was the far-famed Mademoiselle Löwe.

I ought, perhaps, in discretion to say nothing

of this lady, because it is more than probable that she may have been heard, before my journals are read, in England; and she *may* have created herself anew, as a singer and as an actress, since the month of September, 1839. At that time,—though she was the most ambitious of all florid singers I have ever heard, constantly venturing cadences in such a style as this —

or, in other words, losing no opportunity to exhibit the long compass of her voice, in imitation of the example set by Malibran,—Mademoiselle Löwe was neither exact in tune nor in time. The extreme notes of the scale she hazarded were oftener false than true; the *roulades* she launched were executed with that hurry, betokening anxiety as to their completion, which, as all the world knows, makes florid singing scarcely tolerable. "I 'll shake you!" exclaimed the provoked old singing-

master, and not without cause, when the aspiring *Aristea*, whom he was superintending, chose, without giving warning, to break away into an enormous trill, more enterprising than correct. Neither, in 1839, was Mademoiselle Löwe the comic actress she professed to be. It is true, however, that, as often as I remonstrated against any of her *smorfie*, I was told that her forte was in the passionate and stately tragedy of Italian Opera,—her best characters such as Norma or Desdemona. For these, her majestic presence, her brilliant eyes, and her raven hair, eminently fit her. Yet so extravagantly was she applauded by her friends whenever she attempted the drawing-room airs and graces of Auber and Herold and Adam, that I suspect the qualification was an excuse employed to quiet a cavilling stranger, rather than a distinction owned for home use. Had I said, in the pit of the Berlin Opera, that I thought serenity and elegance were wanting to the Löwe's demeanour, —had I whispered that marchionesses and court-ladies do not grasp their furled fans in the middle, as if they were tools, not toys, but

let them gracefully dangle from the wrist,—had I insinuated that in the supper-scene in "Le Domino Noir," where the heroine is obliged to appear in a peasant's disguise to baffle the curiosity of a house-full of rakish young *diplomates*, there was a conscious humour and cleverness in her glance and in her assumed *ton de soubrette*, too natural to the woman to be natural to the situation, which is one of the utmost discomposure and alarm: — Had I uttered any one of these heresies, I say, I should probably have been worse treated than I once was at a Paris *soirée* for presuming to assert that Madame Dudevant (George Sand) had ever wandered about the world in "doublet and hose." Therefore, for the sake of peace, as often as my neighbours broke forth into raptures about one of the Löwe's enormous flourishes, I admired the crown of blush-roses from beneath which it issued; — when they found "favour and prettiness" in every one of her motions and gestures, I fell back upon her symmetrical *corsage*, and the sleeve, which was a real *seduisante*. I have never — no, not even in Paris, the Paradise of

millinery — seen on the stage any one who understands the attractions of costume better than Mademoiselle Löwe.

Less admirable in every respect was Mademoiselle Grünbaum, a sprightly and rather ugly young lady, possessing no better requisites for opera than a destroyed voice, and a complete ignorance that such is the fact. Yet she is vaunted as a star by Herr von Raumer, in his letters from England. Of the male part of the *corps*, Herr Mantius was undoubtedly the best; his voice being a sweet tenor, and his style more *cantabile* than the style of most of his mates. Herr Blum, the principal bass, was one of those hard-working artists who take great pains and produce very small results; but he, too, was entirely worn out. In short, as regards the singers, French opera in Berlin, in every other town where I have met it, is a dreary and disappointing entertainment. The German orchestras have no sympathy with the music. However correct and careful they be, I have never failed to find them falling short of that smart and stimulating piquancy which belongs

to French blood, and to French blood alone. The superficial glitter of the Opera Comique (the glitter of a diamond, which, however thin, is genuine) can never be *got up* by German industry and research. Why the trick should be attempted I know not; why the Germans, with all their humour and fantasy, their capital low comedians, their careful actors, and their honest love of the stage, should not be able or willing to support comic music of their own, must strike every one as strange, till he has weighed and considered matters a little.

This I was led to do, after visiting the Königstadtisches Theatre in Berlin; the third theatre of the city, — and the head quarters of illegitimate drama — to which German comic opera now seems banished. To the musician, this theatre, shabby and dusty as it looks, is well worth a visit on other grounds: for memory's sake, as the scene of Sontag's earliest triumphs; for present enjoyment too, as possessing an excellent resident *prima donna* in Mademoiselle Hahnel, — a lady most unmeritedly shut out of the greater Opera House, I was told, by the ex-

press command of the late King. Here the entertainments are as miscellaneous as at one of our own legitimate theatres. One night I heard a version of Rossini's "Guillaume Tell," very tolerably performed, though obviously a work many sizes too large for the theatre. Another evening I enjoyed there a "Grosses romantisches original Zauber-Märchen," by Raimund; "Der Bauer als Millionair," a sort of *pot-pourri*, made up of domestic interest and faëry sympathy; —the *comedie larmoyante* of Kotzebue, and the broad farce of the Leopoldstadt Theatre at Vienna. This would be as difficult, I suspect, to bring home to the sympathies of a British play-going audience as it once was for me to reconcile a foreign friend of mine to the suitability of a bishop's apron, or as it always is to unriddle the arm-wavings and genuflexions of a *ballet* for those unused to pantomimic narrative. I was fresh from reading the "Fiabe" of Carlo Gozzi, where the same indefensible mixture of the real and the absurd is effected with so forcible a mastery over feeling and imagination, that Turandot and her Three Riddles, and the Wonderful Crow, with

their long line of other marvellous kindred, can hardly fail to become old and familiar friends, on a first introduction, to all who have a particle of faith or fancy. Hence, besides being amused, I was interested by finding that the German world had not grown too wise to relish *extravaganzas* little less monstrous. The story of Raimund's faëry legend has the same cast as the ever-green tale of "Cinderella:" — there is a cruel father and an oppressed daughter, and the latter is under the especial care of good angels, who, to avenge Herr Wurzel's ill-usage of her, turn his house upside down, and his money-bags inside out — deliver her and beggar him. The tale could not be carried on, of course, for popular use, without some sentiment and cookery*; but in these essentials we were

* This is not said unadvisedly, but in weary remembrance of more than one "*Lust-spiel*," where tender talking and coffee-drinking (at least) seemed entirely sufficient to keep the German public alive and amused. The fourth and last act of one comedy I shall never forget, in which, after the adventures at a watering-place of a graceful and coquettish heroine (admirably played by Charlotte von Hagen) were entirely wound up, a domestic scene of

let off easily, and it was kept alive by a fund of humour in a low comedian, Beckmann, surpassing any thing in its way which I have seen, — Liston and Odry and Vernet not forgotten. Though many of the jokes and grimaces of this kitchen Leporello escaped me, as completely as the Weller*isms* of Samuel the immortal must escape a newly-imported German, enough was left and comprehended to shake my sides in concord with those of my neighbours, and to make me inclined to wonder why the familiar vein of German genius is not more largely explored by the caterers for German opera.

That its audiences are not beyond the reach of the broadest drollery, or the most simple representations of every-day life, the theatre of the country bears ample witness. But that the living writers of opera books are not further from the *repartee* or *badinage* which gives its vivacity to

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winding silk and eating cakes in an arbour, as accompaniments to the delicate stratagems by which courtship may be protracted, threw every one into extasies, and seemed absolutely to be the portion of the evening's entertainments the most relished.

French dialogue, than they are from the command over interest and climax which makes even Kotzebue's domestic plays so moving, — is no less certain. In France, that sense of the ridiculous, and touch of the positive, which ever intervene to save the *convenances* of the stage, give a certain point and probability to legends even as absurd as "Le Cheval de Bronze," or as repulsive as "Don Juan de Marana." Not merely, on the other hand, do the German librettists, when they get hold of a good subject, wander about dreamily and aimlessly among what is impossible and pointless; they appear to consider all the birds of the air and all the fishes of the sea their fair game. The success of Weber's faëry tale was certain to be followed by an outpouring of enthusiasm for the supernatural. Not less than four of Spohr's operas, "Faust," "Zemire und Azor," "Der Berggeist," and "Pietro von Abano," have been founded on legends of the same family. But the vein, if not already exhausted, requires consummate skill in working; and the Germans have been long reduced to gather up the scraps,

as it were, of the banquet of Wonder, without having learned the art of combination. I will not weary the reader with an interminable list of operas produced since "Der Freischutz," in which sorcery and necromancy, the diabolical and the faëry world, take every conceivable form. To instance the want of selectness of which I have complained, I need only describe the subject of one of Gläser's operas, which I narrowly missed at the Königstadtisches Theatre, on my second visit to Berlin. This was "Der Rattenfänger von Hameln;" and as the legend is less known in England than others of its quality, I will even give a version of it, never printed, which was said and sung to me in my young days till I knew every note of it by heart. It was, indeed, strangely like returning to times earlier than those of my intercourse with the spider-legged piano without additional keys, — to Haydn's "Mermaid's Song," my first musical recollection, — and to the old house, with the cherry tree — a treasury of blossoms in spring and black-red fruit in summer, which overspread the irregular nursery windows, — when I encountered, among the particularly ill-printed

advertisements and announcements of a German paper, a long criticism upon the music and the scenic decorations of an opera, founded upon the good old tale of

The Piper of Hameln.*

At Hameln in Westphalia,
Two hundred years ago,
A tragedy was acted
That made all eyes o'erflow.

A legion of destructive rats — The Plague of Hameln.
This town did sore affright:
In vain were all the dogs and cats
To put the foe to flight.

The citizens of Hameln
Were wrought into a fume,
To see such fierce invaders
Their precious grain consume.

And as in lamentation
They mournfully bewailed,
Their ears with strains of music
Were suddenly assailed.

And soon to their astonish'd view
The strange musician came; — The guest.
All piebald was his garment,
And unknown was his name.

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* The legend may be found recorded in as ancient a book as the "Letters of James Howel, Esq.," written by him when in Germany (1619).

Keen was his eye, and shrill his voice,
When from his lips he drew
His pipe. That pipe, whose loud mysterious notes
Such prodigies could do.

His speech. "Ye citizens of Hameln!"
The piebald piper cried,
"To save you from destruction
My talents shall be tried;

"And every wild voracious beast
Be put to sudden flight,
If unto me most solemnly
His bargain. You will your promise plight —

"That I a golden recompence
Shall this day twelvemonth have,
If I return unto your town
The bright reward to crave."

The men of Hameln promise: Then loud assented every voice,
And promised every tongue;
Whilst loudly did the piebald man
Exalt his wondrous song.

and are delivered. And as he march'd with solemn step
Through the ungrateful place,
The rats, both old and young, did join
In one continuous race.

Nor when a lake appear'd in view,
Did they the race refrain,
But 'midst its glassy waters sank,
Nor ever rose again!

Now all was ease and mirth and peace; The piper cometh again —
The year roll'd swiftly by;
The piper came his boon to claim, —
His boon they did deny. is disappointed.

Three days he loiter'd in the town,
Like one full of dismay;
And when these perjur'd citizens
A mass knelt down to pray,

The wondrous man a vengeance plann'd His revenge.
For that forgotten plight, —
And piped such wild, melodious tones,
That every infant wight

Pursued his steps, as on he march'd,
To catch the lofty strain,
Till not a baby in the town
Did very soon remain.

Each mother's darling urged the chace,
As loud the piper play'd;
And soon approach'd a lofty hill,
— No little heart dismay'd, —

When through a chasm in its side,
Each tender infant pass'd;
And, as it closed its fatal jaws,
The piper gave a blast.

Nor ever, from that day to this, It lasteth to this day.
Hath he or babe return'd;
But every father, conscience-struck,
The awful vengeance mourn'd!

The mother's hope, the father's pride,
Engulph'd in one dark tomb! —
A pillar, by that dreary hill,
Alone records their doom.

R. C.

It would seem difficult to imagine how the Berlin machinists themselves, who are said to be even wiser in their craft than Stone, the old property-man of Drury Lane*, could make any effect with a story like this; even if one remembers the thrilling interest excited by the flight of the magpie with the spoon in "La Gazza Ladra." But, granting the rat procession to be an equally practicable thing, Gläser is not quite a Rossini. I was told that "Der Rattenfänger" is not the best of his productions. As far as I know his music, it seems to me to belong to the hybrid school, and to be at once dry and flimsy.

To characterise this hybrid school would not be easy, and is hardly worth the trouble. But I

* This was the worthy who was used to pronounce judgment upon every new drama, in proportion to the list of movables required for its production. On one occasion, his *quota* confined itself to merely a cradle and a spoon. "Um!" said Stone; "strong domestic interest, I see."

fear it must include graver composers than Gläser. The Lachners, and Lindpaintners, and others of the hour, seem to me, as far as chamber trial and hearsay enable me to form an opinion, to be wandering every where in search of a style. And their want of decision in the matter has in part led to the neglect of the public. For the blame must not be wholly laid upon courts and cabals, that, during four months passed by a traveller in Germany, in towns of every size, each possessing its lyric theatre, — except "Euryanthe" once at Dresden, and Gluck's "Iphigenie" at the "Huldigung" at Berlin, — he could not hear a single German opera! save three by the only writer, ancient or modern, who, to judge from playbills and papers, seems to have a general as distinguished from a local circulation.

This is Lortzing. Resolved not to imitate my Parisian acquaintance ——, who, on a critical tour from city to town, and from town to city, declared he could never fall in with a German opera, when the truth was that he would not take the pains of going to the theatre, — I heard in

one place "Die Beiden Schützen," founded on a flimsy French *vaudeville;* in another, "Caramo;" in a third, the "Czar und Zimmermann." In spite of a certain admiration for the universal genius of a composer who writes the words, and sets the music, and plays a part in one of his own operas — which Lortzing does — I could not relish them. They seemed to me, in the style of their composition, as utterly guiltless of genial German fancy, as the music to which Weippert might set one of our own hard-hearted fashionable novels would be innocent of English spirit. *Fade* and feeble, I could have better borne with the most extravagant melodrame of the Black and White school, that is told in music alternately by creeping *tremolando con sordini*, or the hoarse and overpowering blasts of three trombones! Neither the exercise of mastering that which is dry and difficult (which in certain moods of mind has its charms), nor the disrespectable pleasure derived from what is pretty and enticing, apart from *character*, was to be enjoyed in such music by Lortzing as I heard. If "Le Maçon" and "Le Pos-

tillon," in their German dress, reminded me of the Scotch lady's tea in a tureen, these indigenous comic operas bore a strong resemblance to the same beverage as it is rendered in the interior parts of Germany; — where a pinch of ashy dust, in whitey-brown paper, is brought to the gasping traveller, and the water follows in an open pan, smoking and smoked — where tea, in short, is no tea at all.

The oftener I became so weary and low-spirited under the infliction of these colourless productions, that I could long for the wildest piece of witch-work in the German repertory — the more was I disposed to exalt Weber to an immeasurable height for the nationality of his lighter music; — witness Kilian's song, and the whole part of Annchen, in "Der Freischutz" — witness the exquisite overture and dance tunes belonging to "Preciosa." Yes; he possessed, if ever any man did, the secret of German gaiety. He could transfer to his songs and dances, however light and brilliant, that spirit which is also a living principle of Beethoven's playful music, and worthy of the deep study of any one who would

analyse the mysteries of style. Not only have his airs and melodies a *costume* — in their merriment there is a truth to the outer world, as well as in their sadness to Man's inner heart. Every thing in Nature that is wildest and blithest—the laughing of brooks as they leap from stone to stone, the glancing of early sunshine over the ocean when its waters are curled by the blithest of autumn breezes, the extasy of birds in the full enjoyment of life and summer — has a part and a reflection in his livelier music.

Child of Romance! how varied was thy skill! —
  Now, stealing forth in airy melody,
  Such as the west wind breathes along the sky,
When golden evening lingers on the hill;
Now, with some fierce and startling chord didst chill
  The blood to ice, and bathe with dew the brow;
  Anon, thou didst break forth in brilliant flow
Of wild rejoicing, such as well might fill
  The bright sea-chambers where the mermaids play:
All elemental sounds thou didst control;
  The roar of rocking boughs, — the flash of spray, —
The earthquake's muttered threat,— the thunder's roll,—
Scattering, like toys, their changes through thy lays,
Till wonder could no more, and rapture silenced praise.*

* From "A Garland of Musicians."

It was this vivid felicity of describing emotion by simile, — of expressing the passions in a manner as free from the conventionalisms of France as from the sensualisms of Italy, — that made Weber's operas strike with an electric force to the hearts of his countrymen. It is this peculiar and admirable nationality which has given him the ear of all Europe, and will embalm him for posterity — dare one prophesy how long? Pity, that the throne to which he ought to have been raised in Berlin was bestowed upon a stranger.* Our German friends have anathematised the English climate for cutting short the glorious career of Weber; but

* I do not forget that Spontini had been appointed to his place before "Der Freischutz" appeared. But the whole early life of its composer was a painful struggle with difficulties; and the obstacles to his advancement were so numerous, that for a twelvemonth he laid music wholly aside, and addicted himself to lithography. Let no one reply that Weber started out, in all the fulness of his originality, at once. We have his earlier "Silvana" to prove the contrary. When will kings and patrons remember, that one hand held out to struggling genius is worth "a mob of palms" compelled to honour genius triumphant?

assuredly the lukewarmness at home (till home was taken by storm), which so warped it aside from its natural direction, ought not to be altogether forgotten. To the Artist, self-reliance; but to the patrons of Art, justice!

At the risk of being thought offensively to generalise, I cannot close this chapter without enumerating the three things which every day's experience, in and out of the country, has impressed upon me, as the three wants of modern German Opera: —

Nationality, on the part of its patrons:

Agreement, on the part of its managers:

Probability and truth, on the part of its writers.

I shall be only too glad to be proved in the wrong.

CHAP. IV.

MORNING HOURS.

An Hour at Potsdam and Sans Souci. — The New Palace. — The Music heard in its Gardens. — The Pfauen Insel. — The Schloss. — Wall-painting. — Untidy Gardening. — An Hour in the Berlin Gallery. — The Van Eyck Wing-Pictures. —The Fancy of the old German Masters. — A Word or two touching Lucas Cranach. — The Bath of Youth. — An Hour with Madame von Arnim. — Herself and her "Letters to a Child" identical. — Her Conversation. — Her Rhine Pictures. — The Romance of the Post-horn. — The Spirit of this truly German. — An Hour with Herr Liepmann. — His Invention, — his Patience, — his Assistant.

If, during my operatic evenings at Berlin, I was provokingly disappointed in Germany, I had rich compensation in some of my mornings, which were most delightfully spent, a certain lassitude of body and depression of spirit allowed for; which, rather than lay it to the account of a vexed musical spirit, I will make bold to ascribe to miasma from the Spree, that blackest and most canal-like of streams. There was the morning

idled away at Potsdam, among the terraces which, height above height, rise by a stately and formal gradation of steps and platforms from the great avenue of the New Palace to Sans Souci, — that Prussian Trianon, where Frederic the Great wrote and Voltaire flattered him. It was not permitted me to enter and see the relics of the monarch and his familiar, as the present King of Prussia (then Crown Prince) was, at the time of my visit, sojourning there, to take his part in the autumn reviews. But the best relics, after all, are those that Memory has in store: so, little disappointed, I lingered among the gigantic golden pumpkins and the vines which clothe the front of the terraces (these eatables being more plentiful and curiously tended than the flowers, which would have the first care in an English royal "policy"), thinking of the days that garden had seen, and how like it was to some decoration which a Watteau would have thrown off*, or a Mondonville have bespoken for the

* The French taste, formerly affected, and maintained to a certain degree in Berlin during the late King's

show-scene of one of his grand operas. Then I roamed up the park to the New Palace, the scene of Frederic the Second's concerts; but another King was there, who, like his son, was superintending the military evolutions of the camp; and therefore I could not make my way in to discover whether any traces remain of the musical curiosities enumerated by Burney; — the piano-forte "by Silbermann of Neuberg, beautifully varnished and embellished; and a tortoise-shell desk for His Majesty's use, most richly and elegantly inlaid with silver; and the catalogue of flute-concertos for the New Palace;" and "the most magnificent harpsichord, made by Shudi in England, all silver and tortoise-shell, which cost two hundred guineas," and was spoilt by its transmission up the Havel.

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reign, was strangely crossed by a vein of Gallo-phobia, the manifestations of which were sometimes amusing. I happened to speak of the garden at Sans Souci to a Berlin friend of mine, in much the same words as I have written in my journal. "French, indeed!" was the quick rejoinder; "they are like a much handsomer thing than any thing French! — like an Italian garden, sir!"

In place of any sound of flute or harpsichord, my wanderings round the New Palace were accompanied by the reiterated and pompous cannonading carried on by a party of sham-fighters within a quarter of a mile. Whenever it ceased for a moment, the pertinacious birds of the garden resumed their very noisy concert. The effect was most curious. At a less war-like moment I should have had more chance, I suspect, of coming upon a *ballet* than a concert at the New Palace. The late King, though a staunch upholder of Spontini's thundering marches, in which the utmost amount of Janissary music was accumulated, was rumoured to care but little for Music, but to take a lively interest in the sister art. He was a liberal and courteous patron of those whom he did patronise. It was his wont, I have been told, to surprise the *artistes* who exhibited in his presence with magnificent contributions to their toilettes of cachemeres, ball dresses, and jewellery, laid out in the ante-chamber to await their departure.

Another pleasant morning was devoted to the

royal folly of the Pfauen Insel, a little bosky island on the lake-like Havel, not far from Potsdam, where his late ballet-loving Majesty of Prussia indulged in simpler tastes, and built up, within sight of each other, menageries, palm-houses, temples, conservatories, and show-dairies, and other rural edifices, in such profusion that the privacy of the retreat was entirely destroyed. Un-German as was the taste of Sans Souci, it was better, because more substantial, than the stucco-romanticism of the mock ruin where the King of the Pfauen Insel lived. This is an odd structure, with two shattered towers connected by a bridge of iron-work, as trim and tidy as if it were new from Colebrook Dale; and, on the ground floor, a sham arch-way in the outer wall, enclosing a piece of scene-painting by Herr Gropius, representing a vault and a man in armour, seen through half-open doors. Absurd as all this must appear to an eye used to the rural edifices of English landscape gardening, it was hardly less strange to mine than the manner in which the royal edict to promote floriculture in the Pfauen Insel had

failed in its execution. The "knot" of flowers immediately under the windows of the castle contained nothing choicer than an assemblage of rankly-grown coxcombs. Nor was the monotony complained of a solitary instance of want of tasteful finish: the paths through this faëry domain were of a deep gravelly sand; and the grass seemed innocent of the roller, which produces such miracles on the lawns of our Blenheims and Chatsworths. It has been said that the museums and marvels of the Peacock Island will, under Prussia's new monarch, share the fate of the Pavilion at Brighton under our present sovereign.

But I no more went to Germany to look at quasi-French palaces, or English gardens badly executed, than to hear French music; and as I had seen Versailles, and many a fair pleasaunce at home, the suburban beauties of Potsdam and the Pfauen Insel pleased me less than other morning sights within the range of Berlin. The hour, for instance, expended in the Picture Gallery never failed to return a fund of speculation for the rest of the day. The building itself is

of European fame. Yet, beautiful as it is — Schinkel's recognized master-piece — I never could stand beneath its symmetrical colonnade, nor cross its ample and majestic rotunda to approach the picture saloons (shame that a national propensity should disfigure such a noble vestibule with the odious furniture of spitting-boxes !) without thinking of the old adage of "a large gate to a little city." The contrivance of closetting off the not-too-spacious gallery which surrounds three sides of the building, by lateral screens between every window, may be favourable to classification; but it is singularly destructive of that spaciousness and grandeur of vista which are not inconsistent with serial arrangement, as the perspective of the Louvre testifies. The larger Italian pictures fare ill in the Berlin gallery. Save in one or two exceptional instances, — as in the case of Lorenzo Costa's "Presentation," which is seen down the whole length of the room, — no ingenuity can place the spectator at the distance demanded for a due appreciation of their effect. But as the Prussian collection contains no master-pieces of

southern art to rival the renowned attractions of Dresden, this pettiness of the several compartments may possibly be of less consequence. I should, nevertheless, have not come to such a conclusion of my own unassisted ignorance; nor so easily have resigned the Italian moiety of the gallery, had I not been warned, by one of the most acute and searching modern critics * on painting, in preference to study the fine series of master-pieces of antique German and Flemish art which it contains. Certainly my daily tour to the left of the central entrance ended in my leaving Berlin an idea or two the richer. I had been prepared for the monumentally calm, but not passionless spirituality of the six precious Van Eyck wing-pictures which formerly surrounded the marvellous "Adoration of the Spotless Lamb" (a work worth crossing

* I mean the anonymous writer of a series of letters on the Berlin and Dresden picture galleries, which appeared in "The Athenæum," in the years 1838 and 1839. I have found nothing upon painting in which criticism and illustration are so pregnant with suggestion for the uninstructed. Their technical value too, is, I believe, admitted to be great by those most learned in the art.

the Channel to St. Bavon's, Ghent, to see); prepared for the richness of their colouring, in which, as my guide has poetically described it, "the azures, greens, and crimsons, like richest jewels reduced to pure and many-coloured water, which swam and stayed itself on various parts of the surface, seem rather waved thither by the magician painter's wand—his pencil—than spread." Surely the winged angels on two of the panels are none other than Palestrina's or Orlando Lasso's rich and stately chord transferred to canvas! I had been prepared, again, for the deep feeling and the homely pathos of Hans Hemlink; and so patiently did I wait upon his works, too, that it may be hoped that an appreciation some little deeper than an imitative and traditional sympathy resulted. But, in presence of masterpieces like these, honoured over all the world, it were presumption to venture beyond a simple expression of reverent admiration. Other pictures, however, of an inferior class, are less sacred, and may be less known. One or two, by the singularity of their subjects and manner of treatment, laid such a close siege to my fancy,

and will for ever remain so closely intertwined with all my day-dreams, touching one most interesting section of ancient Art, that, perhaps, they may be dwelt upon less reservedly without impertinence. The day-dreamer, however, must run the risk of being thought to utter fancies signifying nothing.

The wonderful affluence of imagination in some of the antique Flemish and German pictures has hardly been sufficiently felt by those who have contemned them as stiff and monstrous. Yet the chisel of the Gothic stone-cutter never rioted more wildly among the chimæras and the foliage which enwreathe the pillar-shafts and border the portals of old cathedrals, than the pencils of the Paul Brills, and Breughels, and Bosches among combinations of perspective and figures, or even yet wilder exhibitions of the florid grotesque which make up their rich and elaborate and fatiguing pictures. Strange that the lawlessness and exuberance at which Music is only now arriving should have been the point whence Painting seems to have started among the people on this side of the Alps! It is possible, however,

that the fantastic tricks of the newest musicians and the eldest painters proceed from sources totally opposite: in the former case, assumed to conceal exhaustion of power and meagreness of invention; in the latter, the unconscious result of the high spirits and extravagant strength of Art in its childhood and inexperience. Be this as it may, Weber never produced any thing wilder in his supernatural or faëry scenes than is to be found in the lower part of "The Last Judgment" by Hieronymus Bosch. A coarse and sensual Hell indeed is this;—such an one as, to all appearance, might have been *littered* on the canvas during the throes of intemperance following some gross and violent carouse; yet still wonderful from its congruous incongruity — from its direct appeal to those feelings which make out pictures in the fire, and trace warriors, &c. &c. in the veins of a block of marble —wonderful, in short, from the same sort of fascination which the half monstrous half familiar objects of a vision exercise over the first waking thoughts and purposes of the seer. Again, there is Paul Brill's "Tower of Babel," an anticipation of Martin's

vast perspectives and pompous architectural inventions; and there is Breughel's "Ascent to Calvary," teeming with multitudes, strange in garb, earnest in gesture, life-like in feature, and with its Gothic city in the background, — Jerusalem being merely some Prague or Nuremburg amplified. The imagination with which these pictures overflow made mine, at least, positively giddy, and I never approached them without renewed surprise at the stage-tinsel and Lenten starvation of Fantasy now-a-days.

In another mood, yet no less startling in their affluence of invention, are a picture or two by Lucas Cranach. I know not whether I am right, or even state intelligibly my impression with respect to this stout old artist, in saying, that there seems to me in his genius — Gothic as was its manner of expression — a touch of the same lingering paganism as made Dame Venus* long time figure as a demon in

* A long and curious collection of facts and traditions on this subject will be found, illustrated with some of the most elegantly-romantic verses of the day, in the last published volume of Mr. Milnes, — his "Poetry for the People."

the popular legends and faëry tales of Germany, and as is manifest (as antiquarians will witness) in the signs and symbols which may be found among the Christian emblems adorning our most primitive ecclesiastical architecture. In spite of all his incorrectness of design, and unselectness of model, I have fancied that a voluptuousness of tone may have existed in Cranach's mind, not altogether in accordance with the school and period and people to which he belonged. Naked gods and goddesses, the size of life, recur to me, in which the utmost grossness of contour, the most flagrant distortion of limb, cannot utterly neutralise a rich and subduing meretriciousness of intention — an attempt to realise ideal conceptions of sensual beauty. While, last autumn, roaming over that curious and most picturesque building — the Burg of Nuremburg, I came suddenly upon one of these divinities, which had been removed from the picture gallery (so called), and been put aside in a sunny corner. Even then and there — though my head and heart were as full of as many other thoughts

and other associations as they could carry — the malicious gleam from those long eyes, and the sunbeam dancing upon the artfully arranged golden hair, brought back to my mind the heathen troubling Appearance in Tieck's exquisite tale of "The Runenburg," that seduced the innocent gardener from the culture of his flower-beds to a wasting and passionate quest of a cruel evil spirit, — the end of which was madness and death !

The work in the Berlin Gallery which gave birth to this idea, is the "Bath of Youth;" at a first sight as ugly and repulsive a composition as ever tempted dainty gazer to walk on hastily, — still with a curious fecundity of conception, and a hard, heart-striking truth of execution, rivetting all whose inclination permits them to indulge in a second glance. The magical fountain is in the midst of the picture. To the left of it are waggons full of old women — other hags are riding upon pillions — others, again, reversing the legend of the Wives of Weinsburg, are conveyed pick-a-back on men's shoulders. All are in the last stages of hideous

decrepitude, and urging on their charioteers and horsemen with a hollow-eyed, ravenous eagerness; some of them absolutely agape with terror lest Death seize hold of them before they have undergone that wonderful immersion by which their enchantments of youth shall be renewed. The bath itself is half filled with these withered, dismal spectres, as unsightly as Milton's Sin, or Spenser's Error;—in the other half are floating, with an extatic languor,

. . . young budding virgins, fair and fresh and sweet:

on the one side is all the fierce impatience for the wondrous transformation; on the other, the conscious pleasure and amazement of Beauty, as she quits the fountain to bask on the smooth-shaven grass, or to array herself in the gems and garments which are to double her sorceries. Behind is a rich flower-grown parterre, with inviting arbours, and mysterious bosquets, and tables spread, round which a company of banqueters is arranged, and golden cups are kissed by the brave to the health of the fair. The epicureanism of the precept —

> If the world be worth thy winning,
> Think, O think it worth enjoying —

is hardly more voluptuously breathed in glorious John Dryden's familiar couplet, than, in spite of their grimness and angularity, it is expressed in the forms of the ancient painter: and I never passed onward to make myself familiar with the Rubenses or the Rembrandts which hang in a further compartment of the same section of the gallery, without pausing one moment, from the same feeling as makes one unable to resist turning a page of the most familiar or absurd book of "gramarye," however choice or erudite be the library where it is encountered.

Any true musician who has a touch of the fantastic in his composition — and what true musician has *not?*—will probably take an interest in another of my morning pleasures, greater than he has found in my feeble transcript of Cranach's "Bath of Youth." I allude to the hour in which I had the pleasure of listening to the earnest and brilliant conversation of Madame

von Arnim; — that friend of so many artists, and whose journals and letters to Goethe have presented the world with the most poetical picture it has yet received of the master-genius of German music, — the rapt and rugged Beethoven. Even were I willing to publish what passed in the confidence of private intercourse, to record that interview in detail would be impossible. Such a rapid and vivacious and ever-changing flow of eloquence I never encountered, even in a woman, — never such a fund of racy language and quaint illustration, or such a child-like and artless nationality. It was like reading a suppressed page of her strange and poetical "Letters of a Child;" — few celebrated persons being so identical on paper and in personal intercourse as the reporter of Beethoven's *raptus* for Goethe's benefit, and the Lady of Berlin. Never, too, did I look upon a more expressive and striking countenance than Madame von Arnim's. There is a touch in it of Mignon and Fenella; a certain gipsy animation and brilliancy beyond the power of Time to destroy. The hazel eyes are still as

deep, tender, and searching as when they reminded good Frau von Goethe of the tones of the violoncello.* The small and symmetrical figure is as nimble, and the gestures are as impulsive, as in the days when their owner jumped into the Main, near Aschaffenburg, on the overturn of her brother-in-law's carriage,

* The list of similar descriptions, in which the operations of one sense are employed to symbolise those of another, is rich and long. As collaterally illustrating my favourite theory, that such a thing as a solitary gift only exists by exception, and that the several arts are "linked by many a hidden chain," I have taken some pains in its collection, beginning with the well-known definition of scarlet given by the blind man, — "that it resembled the sound of a trumpet." But, not utterly to disgust those who do not incline to such speculations, I will offer only a few specimens. The German girl, over her interminable tapestry work, talks of a "screaming yellow;" the little child, who has since grown one of the most distinguished amateur musicians in England, was overheard improvising on the pianoforte, and singing to herself the while, "This is the tune of the golden spots." But the finest application of this class of metaphor I have ever met with was made by a beautiful mute, in whom the deprivation of speech and hearing seems but to have sharpened every intelligence, and refined every grace, and quickened every affection. On overlooking some one writing a letter in very pale ink, she said, in her manual language, "*whisper-writing!*"

to rescue the purse of violets Goethe had thrown to her at a party at Wieland's, among the other treasures of the floating band-boxes. The enthusiasm is still untired which stirred the maiden to take an active interest in the fate of the poor Tyrolese, and enabled the mature woman to master the modeller's difficult and delicate art, for the purpose of designing a monument to the memory of her beloved friend — as the striking design at the head of the English version of the "Letters of a Child" testifies. A like ardour of perseverance helped Madame von Arnim through the study of a strange language, for the purpose of effecting her unique translation of her own letters: and had the reader heard her once describe all her hopes and fears, the dissuasions of her more experienced friends and the undismayed pertinacity with which she plunged into the chaos of case and person and idiom, in fulfilment of her purpose, — he would, perhaps, feel with me, that though incorrect and *baroque* and at times hardly intelligible, is the language called English in which the "Letters of a Child" are rendered,

no other version would do as close a justice to the meaning and to the personality of the authoress. No translation would make the book acceptable to the million. Yet those who would search out the connection between Music and the visible and invisible world, without some examination of which no one can enter into the music of Germany, should not disdain the "Letters" in question; even supposing him to care nothing for the vivid and breathing pictures of character, and the adventures, fully as good as faëry tales, they contain. There have been few illustrations of the delicate and almost impalpable chain of associations, which connect particular sounds with particular scenes, more exquisite than some of the less known passages. One or two, as this chapter has taken a fantastic colour, can be hardly resisted. The first is from the "Letters on the Rhine." How they teem with the true spirit of that festal and fancy-haunted river, I felt when, a few weeks after reading them in Berlin, I was wandering among its old grey castles, and its vineyards, each protected by its own crucifix. Surely there is a Rhine-picture

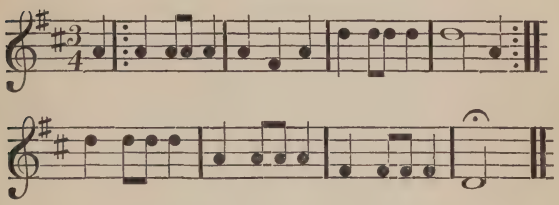
and a Rhine-melody in every line that follows. The date is from Rochusberg above Bingen: —

"Here are still a thousand splendid paths, all leading to the celebrated parts of Rhine; on the other side lies the Johannisberg, up whose steep we daily see processions clambering, who invoke blessing on the vineyards; yonder the departing sun streams in his purple over the rich land, the evening breeze solemnly bears up in the air the flags of the tutelary saints, and swells out the white folded wide surplices of the clergy, who, at dusk, wind like an obscure cloud-picture down the mountain. As they approach nearer, the singing may be heard: the children's voices sound the music distinctly; the bass pushes only at intervals the melodies *into the right joints*, that the little school-crowd may not carry them too high; and then pauses at the foot of the hill, where the vineyards discontinue. As soon as the chaplain has sprinkled the last vine from the holy-water vessel, the whole procession is scattered like chaff; the clerk takes flags, water-vessel, and sprinkler, stole and surplice, all under his arm,

and carries them bodily away; and, as if the boundaries of the vineyards were also those of God's audience, worldly life directly follows: their throats are taken possession of by roguish songs, and a merry *allegro* of fun drives away the song of penitence. All sorts of mischief go forward: the boys wrestle and fly their kites on the banks in the moonlight, the girls spread out their linen which lies upon the bleach, and the lads bombard them with chestnuts; then the herdsman drives the cows through the uproar, the ox foremost to make a way; the pretty daughters of the landlord stand under the vine-foliage clapping with the cover of the wine-can. Then the canons call in and pass judgment upon the vintages and cellars; the matin preacher says to the chaplain after the procession is done, 'Now we have represented to God what the vines need: one more week's dry weather, then early in the autumn rain, and at noon warm sunshine, and so on through July and August:—if then there be no good vintage, it is not our fault.'"

Another story of musical association is too

entirely German in its theme and its romantic colouring not to have a place here. None who have travelled through the country can have failed to catch up the postilion's well-known ditty, blown sometimes through a cracked pipe; for it is not every post-boy who is skilful enough on the horn to be promoted, like our Cologne Jehu, to the post of stage-herald: —



To some the tune will be known by its having been wrought upon by Spohr, as the theme of a minuet in the sonata for piano-forte and violin, op. 96., which he calls "Souvenir d'un Voyage à Dresde," though certainly never was exercise drier than the production in which this travelling ditty is put into the harness of science. Others, again, will couple it in their fancy with Schubert's charming song "Der Post." I know nothing more pleasing, of its own dreamy

kind, than, when travelling late at night, to be wakened from some reverie by the sudden striking up of this melancholy tune (all melodies for the horn have an ineradicable touch of melancholy in them) and seeing the toll-bar which lies across your road rise, with a motion like the waving of a recumbent giant's arm, to the diagonal posture it occupies by daylight. Let us see how Madame von Arnim, in her diary of the last days of Goethe's mother, undertaken at the poet's own request, and here given with but a trifling change or two, in her own racy and broken English, gives us

The Romance of the Post-horn.

"Before I went into the Rheingau," says Bettina, "I went to take leave of her, and, as a post-horn was heard in the street, she said that its sound even now pierced her heart, as at the time when she was seventeen.

"At that time the Emperor Charles XII., surnamed The Unlucky, was at Frankfort. All were filled with enthusiasm for his great beauty. On Good Friday she saw him in a long black

mantle, with many gentlemen and pages dressed in black, visiting the churches on foot. ‘ Heavens! what eyes had that man! with what a melancholy did he look up from under his sunken eyelids! I did not leave him; I followed him into all the churches; in every one he knelt upon the last bench among the beggars, and laid his head a while between his hands; when he looked again, I felt as if my heart was struck with a thunderclap. When I returned home I found myself no longer in my old way of life: it was as if bed, chair, and table no longer stood in their usual places. It had become night; lights were brought in. I went to the window, and looked out into the dark streets, and when I heard those in the room speaking of the Emperor, I trembled like an aspen-leaf. In my chamber at night I fell upon my knees before my bed, and held my head between my hands like him, and it was as if a great gate were opened in my heart. My sister, who enthusiastically praised him, sought every opportunity of seeing him. I went with her — nobody could have an idea how deeply

my heart was concerned. Once, as the Emperor drove by, she sprang upon a stepping-stone by the way-side, and gave him a loud cheer; he looked out and waved his handkerchief kindly. She boasted much that the Emperor had given her so friendly a token; but I was secretly persuaded that the greeting was meant for me, for in driving past he looked again towards me. Indeed, almost every day that I had an opportunity of seeing him something occurred which I could interpret as a mark of his favour, and in my chamber at night I always knelt before my bed, and held my head between my hands, as I had seen him do on Good Friday in the church; and thus was a private intelligence of love built up within my heart, of which it was impossible for me to believe that he knew nothing. I believe that he had surely inquired out my dwelling, because he now drove oftener through our street than before, and always looked up to the windows and greeted me. Then I may well say that I wept for joy.

"'Once, when he held open table, I pushed my way through the sentinels, and came into

the saloon instead of the gallery. The trumpets were sounded: at the third sound, he appeared in a red velvet mantle, which his two chamberlains took off, and walked slowly, bending his head a little. I was quite near him, not at all thinking of my being in the wrong place. His health was drunk by all the nobles present, and the trumpets crashed in; and then I shouted loudly in concert. The Emperor looked at me, took a goblet to pledge again, and nodded to me; nay, it seemed to me as if he would have brought me the goblet, and I must believe it to this day. It would cost me too much if I were compelled to give up this thought, at which I have shed so many tears of happiness. And why should he not? — he must have read the great enthusiasm in my eyes. At the flourish of drums and trumpets in the saloon, that accompanied the toast in which he pledged the princes, I became quite miserable and faint; so much did I take this imaginary honour to heart. My sister, with a good deal of trouble, got me out into the fresh air, scolding me that on my account she was forced to

lose the pleasure of seeing the Emperor dine: indeed, after I had drunk from the fountain, she tried to get in again; but a secret voice said to me that I ought to content myself with what had been granted that day, and I did not return with her. No, I sought my lonely chamber, and seated myself upon the chair by the bedside, and wept painfully sweet tears of the most ardent love for the Emperor. The next day he took his departure. It was four in the morning on the 17th of April, I was lying in bed, when I heard five postilions' horns blow. This was he. I sprang out of bed; with overhaste I fell in the middle of the room and hurt myself; I took no notice of it, and flew to the window. At that moment the Emperor drove past. He looked up at my window, even before I had torn it open; kissed his hand to me, and waved his handkerchief till he was out of the street. From that time I have never heard a post-horn blow without thinking of this parting; and to this very day, now that I have voyaged down the whole stream of life and am just about to land, its wide-sounding tone painfully affects me, and

that, too, when so much upon which mankind has set value has sunk around me without my feeling sorrow. Must one not make strange comments when one sees how a passion, which at its very origin was a chimæra, outlives all that is real, maintaining itself in a heart which has long neglected all such claims to folly? Neither have I ever had the desire to speak of it: to-day is the first time.

"'In the fall which I then got through overhaste, I wounded my knee upon a large nail that stood somewhat high out of the floor; the sharp head of the nail formed a cicatrice, resembling a very fine and regular star, upon which I looked often during the four weeks in which, shortly afterwards, the death of my Emperor was tolled by all the bells for a whole hour every afternoon.'

* * * * *

"Your mother showed me the scar above the knee, which remained in the form of a very distinct and regular star. * * * In September, while at the Rheingau, I received a letter to say that your mother was not well. I hastened

my return, and went immediately to her. The physician was just then with her, and he looked very grave. When he was gone, she handed me the prescription with a smile, saying, 'There, read: what may that forbode? An application of wine, myrrh, oil, and laurel-leaves to strengthen my knee, which since the summer has begun to give me pain; and now at last water has collected under this scar. But you will see that this imperial specific of laurel, wine, and oil, with which the Emperor is anointed at his coronation, will give me no relief. I see it coming already, that the water will be drawn towards the heart, and then it will soon be over.' She bid me farewell, and said she would let me know when I might come again. A few days afterwards she had me called. She was lying in bed, and said, 'To-day I lie in bed again as formerly, when I was scarcely sixteen, of the same wound.' * * * The next morning she was no more; she had passed away in her sleep."

So ends this strange and fantastic history —

strangely and poetically told. I do not say that none but those who enjoy it can enter into the chambers of imagery in which a Beethoven and a Weber, a Schubert and a Mendelssohn, have found their inspirations.* But it is in spirit as intimately related to their picturesque and descriptive works, as the novels of Hugo and Balzac are akin to the operas of Meyerbeer — that music in which young Paris delights. And, after having been wearied by traces of spurious taste and misdirected patronage of Art in a guise antipathetic to the national humour, as the visitant to the Berlin Opera needs must be, any outbreaks of Nature like the freaks of the old German masters, or the excursive rhapsodies such as the "Letters of a

* "German literature is inextricably interwoven with German philosophy. There is not a faëry tale of Tieck, not a song of Goethe, not a play of Schiller, not a description of Humboldt, in which this under-current is not perceptible: nay, however paradoxical it may appear, I will venture to affirm, that German music has received much of its peculiar character from the same source; that the compositions of Beethoven, Weber, Sphor, Mendelssohn, are deeply tinctured with the same spirit." —*Mrs. Austin's Characteristics of Goethe*, vol. iii. p. 266.

Child" contain, become welcome by recoil and contrast. To myself, one of Madame von Arnim's pages is very like one of Schubert's exquisite melodies; and the hour I spent in her company took me as far away from the frigid and unnatural classicalities in which the patron of Voltaire and Quantz delighted, as if, half a hundred paces from her hotel, I was not to be shocked by the sight of the Library, which, as every guide-book tells, was built in accordance with a whim of Frederic the Great, who desired the architect to take a chest of drawers for his model.

A thoroughly agreeable hour, too, was the one spent in the study of Herr Liepmann. This indefatigable man, as all Europe by this time knows, has found means — by an invention, the details of which are still a secret — to reproduce fac-similes of the works of the ancient painters, so exact as to make many cavillers, in the first instance, foolishly insist that his impressions were but copies wrought by the hand. A small head by Rembrandt, the original of

which had struck me in the Museum, was in every circle and drawing-room, dividing public attention from the yet more miraculous works of that engine of modern necromancy — the Daguérrotype.

But I was more interested by what I heard of the man than even his invention; and my interest was not disappointed on speaking with him face to face. He was living, in September, 1839, in a remote part of the city — the Alexander-strasse. His lodging (for one does not speak of a house in Germany) was up a gloomy and desolate court, approached, of course, by a common stair, which was broken and dirty. The two little rooms appeared yet more squalid than the reality to an English eye, from the uncarpeted floors, and the close, loaded atmosphere attendant upon stove-warmth. A few chairs, and a few copies of the Rembrandt head, formed the principal furniture.

We were ushered into this comfortless place by a pretty fair-haired girl — such an one as Sohn or Bendemann might take as model for one of their female figures. This was an orphan

whom the artist had adopted — his sole confidante — his sole assistant. She watched every question we put with a jealous alacrity, as if (woman-like) she feared that her master's simplicity might allow him to utter the secret her wit knew how to conceal. But, as regarded me, she need not have been uneasy. Satisfied that the copies could not have been brought to so marvellous an identity by any manual process, and unable to have remembered the secret of the method, had I even once understood it, I was much more intent upon the slight, pale, timid man, as an impersonation of steadiness and perseverance, than upon the intrinsic curiosity and value of his invention. Herr Liepmann has the softest German voice that ever spoke to me. A thin and flaxen moustache upon his upper lip added to his appearance of bad health. This, he said, was largely owing to the hard labour which he had undergone to keep life and soul together, while he was making his experiments. Originally a not very successful painter, he had been for years haunted by a notion of his invention; and, in spite of the laughter and

want of sympathy of all to whom he had spoken of it, he had gone on studying the picture in the Museum selected as his first experiment till he had brought it away, to quote his own words, "hair by hair;" and arranging his process — working half the night the while as a manufacturer of sealing-wax, to gain time and *groschen* to bring his plans to maturity. I have never seen any one freer from the conceit and self-assertion so often evident in inventors. He listened to every objection as to permanence, universal practicability, &c. &c. as meekly as if he had never thought of such things before: while the girl, who hung about the door of his sanctuary with her hand jealously upon the lock, looked half out of patience at so much catechising and qualification; and a thoroughly Berlin expression passed over her face when Herr Liepmann said, that, though his labours had excited some interest in England, they had met no encouragement in France. To close the visit, we had the King's letter brought out, which had bestowed upon the inventor an *honorarium*, amounting to some 20*l.* of English

money, with many flattering expressions of admiration and protection.

Since then the art has made great progress: the successful reproduction of a second subject, after a cabinet picture by Mieris, has assured the discoverer that his invention is not limited, as many declared it must be, to freely-touched subjects on a large scale. Notice and honours have flowed in upon him; but I am mistaken if he be not too good a German to have become other than the same simple, unprofessing, uncourtier-like man as I saw in the Alexanderstrasse.

Who knows but that Music's turn is next to come in the century of modern inventions; and that the machine for registering improvisations, which excited so much of Dr. Burney's curiosity when he visited Berlin, may not be all but perfected by some German votary to his art, as patient and self-denying as Herr Liepmann? Instances of industry rise up on every hand in Germany which are positively frightful to people so careless of detail and indolent in research as ourselves. One of the finest collections of

sacred music in the country, belonging to a learned professor of jurisprudence at Cologne, is based upon the scores, to copy which he abridged himself of sleep, while undergoing the severe study of the law, and when unable to purchase. We should do well, in all the arts, to take home examples like these!

CHAP. V.

A LETTER TO A LADY.*

TIRED with strange sights—since, even with Youth's endeavour,
The zest of wandering cannot last for ever;
Tired with strange voices — coarse, and loud, and glad; —
Alone — a little dull — a little sad; —

* —— "sometimes on the road
My dear Mr. Rumble composes an ode."

I had meant to include in my chronicle of mornings in Berlin my ramble through the lonely and umbrageous Thiergarten to Charlottenburg; but I have already so far overpassed my limits as to prefer, because shorter, the rhymes which, following the bad habit of the divine in Hayley's comedy, I strung together as I loitered thither, and on my return. Going, the sun was most oppressive, and the air loaded with exhalations from the ponds with which the Hyde Park of Berlin is diversified: returning, the public conveyance into which I mounted was one, compared with which a Parisian *coucou* is a positive down-pillow on wheels — an English taxed cart effeminately soft. The traces of that hot heavy air, and that punishing leathern *in*convenience, which the verses, I doubt not, bear, may assure those who read them that they are a part of my journal, in its original form, and written as a letter, without the remotest idea of their ever being printed.

Dear Lady, ever present to my thought,
Say, may I tell you what Berlin is *not?*

A wide white city, stretched along the brink
Of the dull Spree, — no river, but a sink;
It could not charm you — if to you, as me,
The trimly-modern brings satiety.
Here, streets in ranks and squadrons are array'd
In one same uniform of dull parade,
As if great Fritz (whose shade, methinks, looks down
A pig-tail'd cherub in a false bay crown,
Simpering to ape the sneer of keen Voltaire
The while he hovers heavily in air)
Had bidden the conscript walls to muster come
By proclamation made at beat of drum.
Yet, many a temple's fair proportion charms,
Where Schinkel mimics all the classic forms,
As like the ancients — ev'n when least he fails —
As is Sans-Souci to the true Versailles,
Or shepherd, with his pipe, on German plains,
To blessëd Arcady's unsmoking swains.

O! far more welcome such old towns to you
As quaint Cranach or Albert Durer knew;

Where stately minster, with its holy bells,
In every chime some pious legend tells;
Where 'broider'd gables totter o'er the streets,
And every passer-by the pilgrim meets, —
The coif'd and wrinkled nurse, who lifts to view
The heavy babe with eyes of china blue,
The square red burgher and his kerchief'd dame, —
Are each a picture in its ancient frame!

Yet, strange to say, despite its lifeless grace,
The seasons seem to doat upon this place:
Ev'n now, — while fierce and devastating rains
Plough up your gardens and lay waste your plains,
And, by hard Common Sense in mockery sent,
Make water-souchey of your Tournament, —
Here stays the sun, as though he hoped to see
Fair Daphne's self in every linden-tree;
Here smiles the moon, as soft, as bright, as bland,
As though Endymion couch'd on Prussia's sand.
I've linger'd in the Palace-court at night,
Lured by the witchery of her blessed light,
And wondering at the faëry work she made
With corridor and arch and balustrade,

Wrapping, the while, in clear sepulchral glow
The silent soldier pacing to and fro,
Till — every earthly cumber cast aside —
I soar'd aloft with Fancy for my guide;
Thought, o'er the lofty window's gleaming glass,
I saw the Lady of the Castle * pass,
Or that forsaken court and gloomy hall
Were lighted for some ghostly festival,
Where, with long locks and sweeping mantles, came
In chill procession many a knight and dame;
Gazed on the pageant with an icy glance,
Where crownëd phantoms swept in solemn dance! —
Then, from such visions down to earth drawn back
By thoughts that haunt ev'n Fancy's wildest track,
My heart, in time gone by, on distant shore,
Past dreams and hopes and pleasures living o'er,
Yearn'd with strong love for those, beyond recall,
Who answer not beneath the funeral pall;
And summon'd next, with like impassion'd prayer,
The few who still support, assist, forbear —
* * * * * * *

* Every guide-book has the story of the Family Phantom of the Prussian Kings, who is seen gliding through their palace shortly before the decease of any member of the royal family.

Nay — this is wanton! —— Do not scorn me quite!
Though your poor friend have ta'en so far a flight,
'Tis only transient. Lo! the dream is o'er,
And Berlin shines by day — a handsome bore!
A bore, in whose unvarying gait is seen
The forms mechanical of forced routine;
The soldier's wisdom and the soldier's cares,
His Bobadil approach, his Werter airs:
And here, in truth, 'twould move your mirth to see
How sabre-tash and sentiment agree;
How prim young ensigns sigh (the while they eat)
In *fraüleins'* ears, — fat, melting, half discreet; —
Nay, even the stalwart *routier*, tough as oak,
Embalm'd while living in tobacco-smoke,
Buys not his love with gold — our lure of Age —
But the stale phrases of the comic stage;
And, parting with a comrade, sweetly sips
His "*wiedersehn*" from male, moustachio'd lips!
While thus the town, with military air,
Doth its King's tastes *de garnison* declare,
'Tis whisper'd that, minutest waifs to catch,
Ev'n martinets o'er vagrant words keep watch.
'Twas but the other night I chanced to see . . . . .
Hark! some one knock'd! —— the *kellner*, with my tea!

Truce to state secrets — know ye not full well
Not mine their tangled maze? And must I tell
Of all the shrines which threefold Art uprears? —
Not of the Opera, that would scratch your ears,
As Löwe, with a most tramontane skill,
Screams *Norma*'s passion through a throat of quill;
Nor, knowledge granted, hath my feeble rhyme,
To lead you through that gorgeous temple, time,
Where hard, but life-like, from the canvas start
The darlings of the homely German heart,—
Where Holbein's bearded men their girdles clasp,
And Hemlink's Marys o'er the Martyr'd gasp,
And many a plain old painter holds in thrall
The silenced spirit to an inch of wall.
Leave we these treasures to a fitter fate,
—— —— would laugh, of pictures should I prate!

But one lone temple claims, before we part,
Your poet-worship, and your woman's heart.
Where are we now? The town is far behind, —
No distant hum is wafted on the wind;
In Autumn's mellow noon-tide, scarcely wave
Yon tall columnar pines, that watch a grave,

Lone, but not dreary, — sacred and serene,
Where, sweetly shelter'd, rests a weary Queen *,
Her children's garlands wither'd o'er her head,
But not her children's love! What peace is shed
O'er that mild brow; — how like an angel's fall
Those long chaste tresses 'neath her coronal!
Calmly her claspëd hands her breast enclose: —
You will not weep. O well is such repose!
O well the sleep no battle-clarion breaks —
No earth-cloud dims — no slanderous phantom shakes;
O well when nations such a rest revere!
No pompous verse — no purchased mass is here;
But mothers pray; and, treading small, like birds,
Creep little children, whispering holy words;
And Man's harsh tones drop down, subdued and slow,
Around the couch where the Beloved lies low!

—— Was that the passing-bell? or but the chime
Of the town clocks? I know the fated time;
For here, replete, the weary sons of men
Shut up their doors and hide in bed at ten;

* It is hardly needful to mention Rauch's statue to Queen Louisa of Prussia, as the chief if not the sole attraction to Charlottenburg.

And I, who deem that maxim wisdom true,
To "do in Turkey what the Turkeys do,"
Feel, like the rest, outworn and slumb'rous quite,
And, nodding, wish your Ladyship good night!

Ah! where are *you?* Enthron'd in golden chair,
Watching the great world roll without a care?
Opening with eager lips your stores of wit,
Some falsehood to laugh down — some fool to hit?
Or, with more generous bravery, to defend
The faults and follies of an absent friend?
Heard I my name? and was the vision true?—
Take, then, a rhymester's blessing, and adieu!

Berlin, September, 1839.

CHAP. VI.

QUARTETTS AND AMATEURS.

Berlin in Autumn. — Haydn's "Seasons."— Indisposition to Music. — Herr Zimmermann's Quartett. — Comfort of Chamber Music. — Female Education in North Germany.—The Sing-Academie.—Fasch and Zelter: a brief Sketch of the former. — Imaginative and Eccentric Character. — The Performance I heard. — Haydn. — Mendelssohn. — Amateurs *versus* Professionals. — A worthy "Agnes von Hohenstauffen." — Conclusion.

WHATEVER influences constraint and disunion, patronage capriciously bestowed, and authority turned into an engine of cabal, may have exercised in the Prussian capital to the deterioration of its Opera, they have still not been able to destroy a spirit of strong musical vitality, taking forms too exclusively German to be passed over. There is admirable chamber-music to be heard in Berlin; quartett-playing worth a journey thither to seek; to say nothing of that magnificent institution, the offspring of

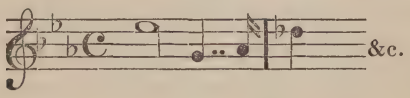
Fasch and the god-child of Zelter — the Sing-Academie.

I visited Berlin during its flat season, when the amateurs were taking health at some *brunnen* or other, or pastime among that fine scenery which the Germans enjoy so heartily. The court was at Potsdam for the reviews, with its army of fiddlers in attendance. To a Londoner, then, who is accustomed to the utter pause and desolation which September brings — when the one-eyed street musician, who hobbles along his doleful way, scraping out his surgical tunes, is about the only specimen of the genus Violin to be found; when every *Cello* is holiday-ing it in the provinces, or gone home to Germany to recruit himself; and even Golden Square, that centre of instrumental study, is as guiltless of melody as a Friend's meeting-house; it was a welcome surprise, and an evidence of the wealth of the city, that, at such a stagnant time to collect a quartett was possible, even to the active hospitality to which I was so largely indebted. Yet more remarkable it seemed, that, when collected, the quartett should be one of such rare

excellence as our own metropolis could never match in the very prime of its fullest season.

I had been hearing in the morning two parts of Haydn's "Seasons" performed in the bleak, naked, rectangular Garnison-Kirche, with an indifference ascribable as much to a severe headach as to the moderate excellence of the performance, — music though it be to revive the weary, and give appetite to the satiated, by its exquisite freshness: and, in the waywardness of indisposition, I had half grumbled at the necessity of listening to any thing more that day. Letters had not come when they ought to have come: the weather was airless; the street odours of Berlin anything but Sabean, as the entire flatness of the site renders all kennel-streams stagnant. I was suffering, then, under a *malaria*, which I chose to consider was *not* to be fought off. A potent specific was required to deliver me from the incubus sitting so heavily upon my spirits. I but chronicle this perversity of mind and sickliness of body (the latter, dear nervous reader, depends more closely on the former than you will like to own) to

illustrate the excellence of the tonic which restored me to that eager and enjoying state of attention without which Music has no existence, — on the principle of the extinction of sound in *vacuo*.

Excellent, indeed, was Herr Zimmermann's party, beyond my then experience. I have since heard my friend Herr David lead a similar force at Leipsic, in a yet finer style. In Beethoven's admirable quartett in E flat —

such ease, breadth, and boldness, — such a consentaneous, yet firm, playfulness in its *scherzo;* such a deep, yet uncaricatured intensity in its slow movements — such a spirit and fire in Mendelssohn's quartett in E minor which followed, with just that touch of old-world quaintness which many of his secondary subjects demand — such a French fineness, without French conceit, in the quintett by Onslow which wound up the evening, — one of his later and more elaborate works (which came out

from under their hands, as the old lady said of her daughter's favourite suitor, "quite overboard graceful,")— I must be more languid in body than I was then, and more sullen in mood than I hope ever to be, to partake of such a treat without the liveliest and most pleasurable excitement. After all, there is nothing like chamber-music, heard in one's own chair, and among one's own friends, — music that one can at pleasure stop when the spirit grows dull, and that goes on without that anxious straining after effect, of which, in presence of the public, few if any artists are able utterly to divest themselves. Were I the Duke of ——, I should be largely tempted to imitate Frederic the Great's strong measures employed to obtain La Barbarini, and to send off my myrmidons in search of Herr Zimmermann and his associates.

This admirable quartett is only one among many which Berlin affords for the delight of the winter evening circles of those who are not sold to the exotic opera, and can enjoy, intelligently, music which, according to common

English estimation, is of little use save to make "Quintilian stare and gasp." Herr Zimmermann's party would hardly have played the exquisite and widely-varying compositions of Beethoven, Mendelssohn, and Onslow with such expression and spirit and unction, had not intelligence been quickened and study encouraged by the attentive and refined sympathy of their audience. "The amateurs in Berlin," says my pleasant predecessor, the author of the "Ramble among the Musicians of Germany," "are all little *maestri;* they dabble in composition, have most of them the score of a mass, sinfonia, or overture locked up in their desks, the consciousness of which helps to sweeten their lives, and gives them the smiling satisfaction which Mr. Bickerstaff discovered in the girl who wore embroidered garters." As much as this I had no means of discovering; but I found traces of taste and knowledge every where, and know that they possess one amateur *pianiste* and composer of force and feeling sufficient to solve, in her own single self, the question of female capacity in the art which perplexed us while study-

ing the "Esmeralda" of Mademoiselle Bertin. Madame H——, indeed, is little less accomplished in music than is her husband in his profession as a painter. I shall never think of the grand oil sketches of heads, taken from the life in Rome, which adorn his *studio*, without a running accompaniment, as it were, of the graceful and masterly compositions in which, by the aid of her exquisite finger upon the pianoforte, she called up her scarcely less characteristic remembrances of their long Italian journey. The solidity of female musical accomplishment in Germany is one of the surest evidences of the deep root which the art maintains in the land. For, be it remembered, this knowledge is found in a society where the housewifery, ridiculously banished from our female education, is practised sedulously and with a cheerful self-complacency; where every room bears tokens of the tapestry-working diligence of its female inmates, — and where in every circle the Englishman runs a good chance of being relieved from his uncouth struggles at German phraseology by being addressed clearly

and elegantly in his own language. How, in spite of the gratuitous demolition of time, caused by early and frequent and long-protracted meals, the German ladies work, upon chairs, screens, and ottomans, so many scenes of Sir Walter Scott, so many sentences of the Language of Flowers, — speak so many languages — astound one with familiarity with so many books — and understand Music so thoroughly, — is a mystery I am unable to this day to solve, and which I leave to all conscientious "principals of seminaries" to examine.

A splendid vocal testimony to their artistic accomplishments is the often-adverted-to Académie founded by Fasch, and brought to perfection by that good man of Berlin — Goethe's friend, and Mendelssohn's master; — the upright and intelligent and liberal Zelter.

Of the services rendered by the latter to Art, and his claim to be numbered among the worthies of German music, as a man of many gifts and pursuits, from all of which he drew something of aliment and support for the one to which his life was devoted, the English

public already knows as much as can be given in sketches as limited as mine. The fund of golden precepts which his letters contain, the honest, zealous, affectionate heart they display, has in some measure been opened to us by critics and translators. No one, indeed, can touch Music in North Germany without drawing upon it for some of the clearest writing, and sincerest thinking, and most healthy feeling which æsthetic criticism possesses. The name of Fasch is less known. It is true that, when Dr. Burney was in Berlin, he was then harpsichord player to Frederic the Great; but some unlucky accident hindered the two from ever meeting; and it is a question whether Burney would have appreciated much in him beyond his fluency of finger upon his instrument. The real musical spirit of Germany, up to that epoch, most strikingly illustrated by the compositions of Sebastian Bach, was but ill comprehended by the courtly and elegant biographer of Metastasio: and though the works of Fasch, as far as I know them, be not altogether guiltless of the Italian cadences and

flourishes which were gathered and combined in the writings of most of the composers of the time, the man seems to have been a true German. Not, however, one of those rough vigorous sons of his country, with a strong mind in a sound body — working hard and hopefully, and taking Life as it comes, without being vexed with the "fever of vain longing," — who make such excellent pillars to the fabric of Art; — but crotchetty, fantastic, as earnest in dreaming as in working. Born at Zerbst in the year 1736, the son of an elder Fasch, who wrote oratorios, and an opera "Berenice" (like all other ancient German operas, long since forgotten), — his zealous and enthusiastic spirit took so devout a direction in music, after hearing a sacred composition by Zelenka, at Dresden, that his father interdicted his frequenting the churches, lest he should become a Catholic. The current of such aspirations must have been strangely checked by his being appointed, in the year 1756, at the instance of Francis Benda, as accompanist to the flute solos and concertos of the philosophical King of Prussia. Small en-

couragement for his religious dispositions was to be found in the sybaritic cabinets of Potsdam! And, whether from having fallen into an ungenial soil, or whether benumbed by a settled engagement, bringing with it a competency, — a condition which has proved so fatal to many a German ambition, as if hunger and thirst were the best incentives to Genius, — it matters little; but many of his years were trifled away among shadows: some in imaginary experiments to improve the arts of warlike attack and defence; some in *building card-houses*, a passion analogous to that of Winter's for dressing up puppet-show Calvaries; some in arranging a table of colours, by which means a *farben clavier* (harpsichord of colours) should be constructed. At another period, he was in the habit of ascertaining, by arithmetical calculations, undertaken the first thing in the morning, whether he was fit to compose that day, or merely to untie those technical puzzles in which the Donnes and Quarleses of Music have always found a whimsical delight. We are told that he was subject to frequent fits of self-

despondency; would destroy his compositions as soon as they were finished: and it seems as if his genius hardly entered freely and fearlessly on its own proper path till he had reached a late period of life, when the fruits of a journey to Italy, and the composition of a sixteen-part mass, in emulation of Orazio Benevoli's famous composition, took the form of his organising an amateur society, which I am inclined to believe remains unique to this day.

Certainly, it is not saying too much, that the performance I heard at the Sing-Academie was worthy of its *habitat.* The concert-room and the chorus were both in the first style of art: the former, by Herr Ottmer,—a long, cheerful, resonant chamber, richly decorated, with its orchestra at one end, and its wide open space in the midst of the room, — took the air of a private saloon, from the ease and good-nature with which its members chatted and talked: those indisposed to sing, lounging on the benches; those who were less indolent, joining the orchestra. There was no ceremony— no stiffness — no time lost in wrangling for parts: each

one seemed to know his appointed place. The conductor, Herr Ungarn, struck a chord on a Collard pianoforte, and off started upwards of two hundred voices in one of Haydn's clear and jubilant motetts, with a sweetness, a certainty, and a refinement I never heard elsewhere. I felt this all the more from having generally remarked that the quality of the stage voices I had heard in Germany was *throaty* and metallic. What amateurs lose in power, they perhaps gain, when well cultivated, in delicacy. It is hard, indeed, to believe that the diction of instructed persons, occupying themselves for their pleasure in works which, being analogous to the highest strains of poetry, give scope for conception as well as correctness, should not be superior to the delivery of a body, which at best can feel but indistinctly — at worst, is but impressed mechanically with the semblance of feeling. If my notion be reasonable, the critical spirit of Berlin, by making its amateurs fastidious as to *nuance*, may here show its bright side.

Mendelssohn's beautiful psalm, "As pants the

Hart," was then admirably sung: and then a complicated composition by Fasch, which, as I heard it, was charming, but, intrusted to a less sensitive body of choristers, must fail in its effect. It is not strange that in the world of Art, as in every other condition and passage of life, the balance should be kept even; and that overweening ascendency should be provided against by the fact, that extreme perfection in the executive machine is apt to tempt the creator away from thoughts to details! The excellence of such a body of singers as the Berlin amateurs present, is certain to seduce one writing expressly for it, into such combinations as can be no where else executed. It was a double, perhaps even a quadruple chorus I heard, supporting a high silvery voice throughout a florid *solo*, with orchestral richness and certainty. I was lost in wonder at the feat; but, on coming away, neither chord nor theme was in my ears. How different was it from my first introduction to the close of Handel's "Israel" — weakly played on the pianoforte, and sung by a handful of coarse and melancholy singers! Yet the leading phrase

of *that* chorus niched itself in my ear, and will remain there till it loses its retentive faculty.

The *solo* was admirably sung by a *débutante;* and it was a pretty sight, when the Academie broke up, to see every one crowding round her with words of praise and encouragement. All seemed union and good understanding there: and, by way of a last sanction to the young lady, as one inevitably destined for great things, ——— approached her with his blandest smile, and a most dulcet "Voilà une véritable Agnes von Hohenstauffen!" The force of applause could no further go.

My journal has rambled on as usual, and given to speculations, perhaps as fruitless as those in which Fasch loved to indulge, that place which ought to have been occupied by the stricter facts; that the Sing-Academie, when I heard it, consisted of about five hundred members who met once a week, — a separate practice being held for the younger and less assured portion of its singers; — that admission was made contingent on a certain amount of musical acquirement and vocal gift; and that, as their beautiful room has cost more money than the amateurs

had to spend, they are obliged to give public performances from time to time to keep the debt down. On these occasions they call in orchestral aid. Had my stars been kinder, I would have described one of these "celebrities" for the benefit of our amateurs; but I have already said enough to the wise, — and to the timid perhaps too much. As I strolled down the Linden that evening, when all was over, listening to the merry talk of the groups as they parted for their homes, and my ears full of a choral harmony finer in quality than they had ever before received, all my cavillings against Berlin were forgotten; and, in the humour of the French widow who heard in the church bells an encouraging "*Prends ton valet,*" the clocks, as they chimed seven, seemed to say to me, mockingly, "*You can't do that in Eng-land!*" *

* Were I now to return to Berlin, I should have to discover another interpretation of the chimes; as, even in the last eighteen months, a taste for choral music has so rapidly advanced, that the formation of not one but many establishments, in structure like the Sing-Academie, may be looked for in England as a thing by no means Utopian. — April, 1841.

CHAP. VII.

A GLUCK PILGRIMAGE.—THE "HULDIGUNG" IN 1840.

A Belief in Luck consolatory. — The "Huldigung" at Berlin. — Indifference to move. — Gluck's "Iphigenie en Tauride." —Wretched Night Journey. — Rain and Pageantry. — Arrival at Berlin. — Gay Sight.—Musical Chill.—The Schauspiel Haus. — The Fassmann again. — The Chorus, Orchestra, and Stage Arrangements in Gluck's Opera. — Thorough Disappointment. — Visit to the Exhibition. — Steinbrück's Girl and Elves. — The Illuminations. — Departure. — A Note concerning the Ball, and the new King of Prussia.

WITHOUT a certain superstitious belief in luck, so flattering to that sagacity which would fain never be at fault, and to that enterprise which cannot bear to own itself baffled, save preternaturally, small crosses and disappointments would sometimes be hard to endure. Nothing is so convenient and so soothing as fatalism! The people who are always overturned in whatever vehicle they travel (there are such) set forth on their journeys secure from dismay and surprise.

Those whose lot it is for ever to lose at cards, have the conviction for a warning; and a winning stands them instead of a miracle. I have never returned from a journey without its having yielded me more than I expected in amount of present enjoyment, and of pictures so precious as a treasure stored up against the dark days of laborious confinement or exhausted health. But I must still make an exception or two to this general rule in my own private mind. My luck is to have the stormiest winds that blow, and the roughest seas that roar, whenever I want to travel along "the silent highway" by which, unhappily, every Englishman is compelled to leave his island. My luck it is, never to see Bouffé, or to hear a note of the music of M. Berlioz, in Paris: my luck in Germany is to make vain attempts at rectifying my first judgment of Berlin Opera, and at bringing my voice into concord with theirs who have described it as nothing short of the choicest and most magnificent perfection.

I was never so pleasantly circumstanced for quiet enjoyment — never less disposed to move

— than when I essayed to revise my judgment of 1839, late in the autumn of last year. The best of music and the best of company enjoyed at Leipsic, with such ease and absence of formality as to make me feel them very like home-pleasures, would have tempted me to sit still, if even an ailing body had not chosen, in spite of myself, to confine me to a sofa. It was a drizzling, dreary October Thursday afternoon, closing in coldly and bleakly; the very weather to make an invalid — many days distant from his own books and *piccolo*, and stared at by the cold, glazed, sombre stove instead of being smiled on by his fire (that only companion with whom one is never at odds) — anticipate an evening of choice chamber-music, and the *carte-blanche* "to do just as he liked," with particular *gusto*. "How unfortunate you are!" said ——, who came in to pay me a friendly visit. "They have changed the opera at Berlin to-morrow night, and are going to give Gluck's 'Iphigenie en Tauride.' The letter is only just come. —— has taken a stall for you: you could have got there in time. What a pity you cannot go!"

This was in the week of the "Huldigung," when the nobles of Prussia had prepared for the new King in their metropolis those shows which the limited boundaries of Königsberg, where the monarch was crowned, rendered impossible. Every day's schnellpost had brought us its new detail of the splendours of the *fête* — such illuminations as had never been kindled before — and such a ball as no mortal sovereign ever was bidden to, with concerts, *tableaux*, speeches, and a supper — and *such* a production, by way of nationality, of Auber's pretty, but feeble, "Lac des Fées" at the Theatre of the Caryatides! But, after having run the gauntlet of a long London season, a ball in autumn, in a strange town, was not one of the delights calculated "my mind to move" away from the quieter pleasures I was enjoying; and I had seen the opera in Paris, done in all perfection by Mademoiselle Nau, and Duprez, and Levasseur.

But an opera of Gluck — given in Milder's palace, and on such an august occasion, — that was another thing! I had been accused, on my return to England in 1839, of having list-

ened to German music with uncharitable ears. When I had mentioned my disappointment in the Fassmann, I was told that I could not have heard her: she was nothing save in Gluck's operas — in them superb. Dear reader, of any given age, never believe reserves and qualifications such as these! It is only Cinderella, who is a kitchen maid in the evening, and the queen of a ball at midnight; and nothing short of a faëry grandmother can make a voice, which is destroyed in one character, a nightingale note in any other; or erase the appearances of foresight and study for a single drama only. Such partial praises are always the apologies for weakness. I have even heard people who, in place of being heartily ashamed of our climate in the month of November, will not scruple to assure the stranger — be he even the sensitive Italian, shrivelled to a skeleton by its cold, or blinded by its smoky fogs — that these were phenomena entirely unprecedented, and that London has, in real truth (as meteorological tables would prove), rather more sun than Naples.

These sage considerations, however, did not

rule me, when I was within four-and-twenty hours of Berlin with one of Gluck's operas to be given. On the contrary, the name acted as tonic and cordial: and I had been told I *could* not go. Next to the invitation of a long-desired treat to a *fanatico*, there is no spur like his incapacity being taken for granted by kind counsellors. — At six o'clock I was leaving Leipsic for a night's journey to Berlin.

What a night's journey that was! The North German system of conveyance, which is bound to purvey for every traveller a seat in a carriage — in this indescribably convenient for one who *must* get forward — cannot sweep the roads clear of mud, and does not undertake that the *beichaisen*, to which he is obliged to have recourse, shall be better vehicles than the one in which the redoubtable Knockicroghery drew Lord Glenthorn, in Miss Edgeworth's inimitable "Ennui." The rain, which had for many days been coming down in torrents, that night "fell as if the world were drowned." Half of my fellow-travellers, some forty in number, were wet through before leaving the Leipsic post-

house, — the process being pretty well completed at the first stage, where, on stepping out to change carriages, some of us plunged mid-leg deep into the inky streams with which the high road was covered. Ere we had proceeded for a couple of posts on our way, matters had become too desperate for complaint, — for all, at least, who had not the solace of tobacco — that German bosom-friend! The fumes of "the weed" mingled with the steams from the smoking upper-benjamins and cloaks of the males, and the strong odours of eatables from the provident *sacs* of the gentler moiety of the caravan. A like atmosphere, indeed, I never breathed, save in the *foyer* of the Paris Opera on a masquerade night: both being only flattered by ——'s description when he said, "Talk of air! — I say it was a hot, bad smell!" It was a relief, after two hours of such a Black Hole, in a close six-inside vehicle, to be transferred to an open *britska;* though this was not so screened by rotten curtains of oil-cloth, which refused to draw, but that the icy, steely rain searched every corner of it out. After

all, such nights, even with rheumatic aches to boot, are worse when described than they are when endured. Mine, on the road to the "Huldigung," had its redeeming point, despite the showers and the tobacco-smoke, and a foot which felt like a weight of lead — only that lead is incapable of twinges. The intelligent and sprightly conversation of a lady casually encountered — one of those distinguished women whose age, whatever that be, is the only admirable age, and whose country is intellectual Europe — was worth much inconvenience and a little pain, and has survived in my recollection the bitter air and the blighting rain.

Most disastrous was the work wrought by the latter element on the road. At Delitsch and Bitterfeld, and all the other little towns on the Prussian side of the frontier, the national fancy for garlands had displayed itself, and attempts to do honour to the festival by illumination had been made. But one lamp in three was sputtering out a faint and feeble flame; and when the night-wind rustled the leaves of the evergreen wreaths, a deluge was discharged on the

heads of those entering or issuing from the doors thus graced. The early dawn showed a wretchedly chill and dripping scene; and though, as the day grew older, the sun came out, and the clouds were tossed hither and thither in vast and parti-coloured masses, so as to exhibit a ground of blue sky, the weather remained, to the very gates of Berlin, wild and ungenial—the very worst pageant-weather imaginable. And the holiday dress of the stately city gave a bleak and desolate air of mockery to the draggled crowds under umbrellas that caught the eye whichever way it went.

After driving about for an hour, and, for the one only time in my German experiences, being encountered by extortion in its grossest forms, in despair I found quarters where I should least have expected to find them, in the Hôtel de Petersburgh, under the Linden. Service and ministry of every comfort (and truly I required both) were there afforded me as promptly as if I had been one of the *Grafs*, or Princes, or Countesses whose plumed *chasseurs*, striding about in every direction among their plumed

lords and ladies, gave the court-yard an appearance which whimsically reminded me of Lance's inimitable piece of feather-painting — the tormented jackdaw among the peacocks. If every preparation had not been spoilt by the rain, the show must have been magnificent. I never saw so many fine-looking men in the same narrow space, or so many gorgeous uniforms; and the ladies (though not to compare with an Opera blaze of English beauty, or the galaxy in the Theatre which makes the Dublin Festival incomparable in my remembrance) were some of them well worth looking at, and received the compliment as a matter of course. These gay apparitions, taken in conjunction with food, rest, and warmth, restored me to a belief that a festivity at Berlin must be a very brilliant thing, and that the performance of Gluck's opera could hardly fail to be worth the journey, and the fascinating chamber-music I had left behind me.

Of the earlier ceremonies I heard nothing to make me regret having missed them. The King had been kept in the Dom-Kirche by a

clergyman who had never heard ——'s aphorism, "that no gentleman can keep his congregation entertained longer than twenty minutes;" and, on issuing thence, and taking his place on the throne erected in front of the Palace to receive the homages of his people, he had been reminded of his mortality most cruelly. A sudden burst of the malicious element drenched the fine clothes of the courtiers, laid flat their feathers, and, streaming down the monarch's face, had given it, according to the loyal Rosa Matildas of the Berlin press, only an additional serenity and intellectual glory! "Well," I said, hugging myself with a stupid security, as all these melancholy details were laid before me, "the rain cannot at least have washed away the violoncellos and flutes of the orchestra. Perhaps I was unjust to Fassmann last year. I am going to hear Gluck in all his glory!"

A promise not easy to be kept, as regards that Milton of Music; for — orchestral intricacy and its exigencies laid aside — the art has perhaps no works demanding a higher union

of all the powers which captivate and all that impress than the grand lyrical dramas of the composer of "Iphigenie en Tauride." I know that the master-pieces loved and learned late in one's career are apt to be unduly prized — that, till the time when fond Memory takes the place of judgment, and declares nothing is so delicious or perfect as the music that charmed us twenty years ago, Imagination and Conceit combine to heighten the *gusto* with which works, traditionally considered crabbed, severe, and above common sympathy, are enjoyed. It is a compliment to our own far-sightedness to believe that *we* have the thorough key to their mysteries; and I feel jealous lest, on egotistic and selfish grounds, I may value Gluck's opera-music too highly, because it is one of the last acquisitions I have made, and because the making of it has cost me some trouble — and a night of rain in *bei-chaisen!*

For all these reasons, the reader is spared the rhapsody of anticipation which my journals register. The fulfilment is the thing. This began in a blanking information that, like the

"Der Freischutz" of my first day in Berlin, the opera was to be given in the Schauspiel-haus, with a smaller orchestra and smaller chorus than those of the Grand Opera. The latter was bespoken for the ball. Still I took my seat in the *balcon* of the smaller theatre, though blanked, not hopeless. The work, performed by official command, and during the coronation festivities of a monarch who had even then given indications of strong and large national sympathies, could surely not fail to be well given.

Alas! let no one count upon Royalty being stronger than Luck! The overture to "Iphigenia in Aulis," not remarkably well played, passed over; — and the symphony of the storm, in the midst of which the Priestess enters, upon as fine but as trying a vocal burst as was ever planned by composer for his *prima donna*. But my ear waited and waited in vain. A sound, at once harsh, tough, and feeble, ill represented that splendid invocation of awe and terror; and, but for seeing the distinctive bandeau and wreath, and mystery of many veils (traditionally, as the reader knows, copied from Milder), I

should never have separated the heroine of the piece from the host of screaming satellites who crowded round her, by any predominance of tone, manner, or gesture. It was the very same von Fassmann that I had journalised, and none other! a year worse in voice than she had been in 1839, and not a day better in method than when she dragged Weber's exquisite *cantabiles* out of shape.

The opera was done with much care in stage arrangements, and much liberality as to numbers and costume.* The Scythians danced

* The probability, as well as liberality, of the German stage arrangements struck me forcibly whenever I entered a theatre. One of the most real presentments I ever saw was the scene without the cathedral in the fourth act of Schiller's "William Tell," where the booming of the bells, and the measured thunder of artillery, and the flourishes of wind-music, wafted past on the air, and then trodden out by the sound of many feet, were given with a reality which imposed upon the senses by its force — enhancing the effect of that splendid scene. Modern drama, save perhaps the tremendous interview between Thekla and the soldier in "Wallenstein's Death," has for me nothing more moving than the meeting of Joan of Arc and her sisters, with her dogged, credulous father, who curses her for a wicked sorceress. The acting of the play, as I saw

their ferocious measure in costumes well nigh as savage as those of the *tape-durs** who lorded it in the pits of the French theatres during the days of terror. The Furies, who, by a permissible licence, are preternaturally multiplied in the scene of the vision of Orestes, were sufficiently frightful and ghastly. Nevertheless, in the splenetic mood engendered by vexation and want of sleep, I had something against them also.

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it, was very bad; the Maid of Orleans being personated by a middle-aged woman, little more sylphid in figure than our own Mrs. Glover: but the scene alluded to, as a scene, excited and affected me deeply.

* "The *Tape-durs*," says the writer of M. Fleury's recently-translated "Memoirs of the French Stage," "amused themselves by making a noise in the theatre; singing, or rather roaring, their patriotic songs to the annoyance of all who were less boisterously inclined than themselves. They had not acquired their title of *Tape-dur* quite so early as the 10th of August, but they had long laboured to deserve it. These janisaries of the Revolution wore a peculiar livery: it consisted of wide pantaloons and short waistcoats, with a strange kind of cap, covered with fox-skin, and falling down over the broad shoulders of the wearer; who, moreover, carried about with him, as an auxiliary to this elegant costume, a large knotted stick, which was styled *a constitution*."

They were too tangible, too prominent: instead of being hid among enveloping shadows, with a head or an arm at intervals more distinctly evident — an effect entirely attainable, as many a French *ballet* will testify, — they stood as nakedly out as though they had been so many men and women, applying their snakes to the tormented dreamer very "deedily," as the Hampshire folks have it, and *as if they had been good for his complaint.* I would have forgiven them this, however, or erased such a passage of cavil from my journal, had they only satisfied my ear, and sung in tune; but even this simple excellence was denied me. The chorus was throughout false and coarse: perhaps, on the principle of the white-linen madness of Tilburina's confidante, because their sovereign priestess set them an example.

With her I could only have been satisfied could I have been contented with posture-making, in place of personation. It is true that the graceful and statuesque foldings of her veil changed with every moment to a new and more effective arrangement, but this was done so

obviously and anxiously as to convince me that there lay Iphigenia's heart and treasure: and I could not, for the sake of such drapery-work, forgive defective musical intonation, and the want of that impulse and geniality which, no matter how it be manifested, *must* contribute its share to every performance as distinguished from an exercise. Those might be Milder's robings, but Milder's Greek fire was absent; and the audience ended as it began the evening — cold, and respectful, but unsympathising. It was with an effort that I could remain to see "the charm wound up."

It will serve no good purpose to dwell on the rest of the performance, — on the antiquity of Herr Bader's voice, and the unsuitability of his figure for the part of Orestes. Herr Mantius, as Pylades, delighted me by contrast; and the sweetness of his voice struck me so welcomely as to add another to the long list of assurances that my last year's impressions of the Berlin Opera were neither sarcastic nor uncharitable. As I crept home to bed, more weary in mind than in body, I made a covenant with myself

never again to leave a certain pleasure for an uncertain opera eighteen hours off, though the name of Gluck, and the reputation of a metropolis at high festival-tide, conspired to beckon me.

Betimes in the next morning I went across to the Exhibition to spend an hour, before visits could be admissible, among the modern painters of Berlin. The show was confessedly meagre and inferior — indebted to French artists for some of its cardinal attractions. But one picture, of sweet and delicate fancy, so haunted me as to stand out like a bright spot in the not very bright recollections of the public sights of those two days. It was a very small work by Steinbrück, which, perhaps, I relished all the more from having admired the original sketch a day or two before in ——'s album. The subject was a little girl among elves. The vagrant child has sailed away in a boat, not caring whither, and the waters have floated her into one of those deep woodland recesses where the stream, overhung with trees, is yet more intimately canopied by the large fan-like leaves of water-

plants, so thickly interlacing each other as wholly to prohibit day from coming through, save in a green-tempered light — the very atmosphere of Elf-land! Thus entrapped, the maiden is surrounded by the small creatures of the place. One has leaped into the prow of her shallop — another holds up a rosy shell full of nectar-dew — while a band of yet more graceful creatures, linked hand-in-hand, do their part in arresting her progress, offering her garlands, and gifts, and courtesies. Never was encouragement for truancy so exquisitely painted! The child of Earth is, however, not wholly at ease with her playmates: she stands upright in the midst of the band, half fearful, half pleased. Her sober eye contradicts her saucy lip; and she looks round her with a demure and suspicious glance, as if she knew she was only half worthy of, or only half believed in, the earnest and pretty welcome arranged for her greeting. The picture worthily illustrated one of Tieck's exquisite legends; — and, like the mermaid-music in Weber's "Oberon," or the leading phrase in Mendelssohn's delicious

overture to "Melusine," haunts me to this day with the remembrance of its airy grace and fantastic sweetness.

If I gave the Germans credit for pre-eminence in the fantastic vein in the morning, the illuminations of the evening, incomplete as they were — a *réchauffé* of preparations spoiled by the rain of the preceding night, — riveted me in the conviction that in some things they outdo us in the picturesque. The pair of domes belonging to the churches in the Gens d'Armes Platz, which, with the Schauspiel-haus, make such an effective architectural group from whatever side contemplated, were surrounded with rings of blue and crimson and yellow light — less brilliant than the gas illuminations which, with us, produce such strong contrasts when relieved against the intense sky of night, but of a more harmonious variety and sweetness. The bronzes, again, at either extremity of the Museum were, by some unseen contrivance, so felicitously presented, that the figures seemed balanced in air upon a field of light.

I paused long to admire them. It was tantalizing to be compelled to take up my staff and return, just when the elements had begun to show more clemency, and when every kind voice was inviting me to remain for the magnificent *fête*, the preparations for which in the Opera House * had so cruelly traversed

* The accounts of this festivity furnish another proof of that closer love of the picturesque on the part of the Germans than we possess, and their more constant desire to give Art its due place in all pageants and public celebrations, to which allusion has been already made. One of the principal features at the ball was a series of *tableaux vivans*, arranged by the most eminent painters of Berlin, representing scenes and groups from the history of Brandenburg, beginning with the days of Frederic I., Burggrave of Nuremburg (1417), and coming down to one of Frederic the Great's Potsdam concerts, with a flute solo, performed as in order due ; and Mara's nightingale air, " Mi paventi," executed by Mademoiselle Löwe. This representation, described to me as got up with every conceivable splendour, had been preluded by the performance of Gluck's overture to " Armida," and a prologue spoken by Madame Crelinger.

It ought to be added, that the spirit of this inauguration Festival seems to have been worthily borne out by the present King of Prussia's magnificent and wise patronage of the men of literature, science, and art of his own coun-

my desire to see a work of Gluck's worthily represented. But the temptation was not to be yielded to; and I set forth to return to Leipsic, through another night of *bei-chaisen* and tobacco-smoke, gratified to have a pleasant parting impression of a city which I fear I may be thought to have visited in the humour of —— or ——, rather than in that amiable and placable frame of mind which should distinguish the *fanatico*, — or his love for "the concord of sweet sounds" means nought, if Shakspeare was a true poet.

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try. Under such a reign there is every hope that musical Berlin, ten years hence, will be far different from the Berlin of 1839 and 1840, sketched by me. Every step taken by the new government seems to be wise, liberal, — and national.

MUSIC AND MANNERS

IN

FRANCE.

PARISIAN AUTHORITIES.

MUSIC AND MANNERS IN FRANCE.

PARISIAN AUTHORITIES.

CHAPTER I.

FRENCH CRITICS. — THE JOURNALISTS.

Prominent Position of Music in Paris.—Writers on the Art. — A dangerous Subject.—The Journalist in a Garret.— The Journalist in a Palace. — M. Balzac. — M. Janin. — Madame de Girardin. — M. Karr's humorous Account of the Reading of her Comedy. — The Style of the Journalists of Paris. — MADAME PREVOST'S BOOK, by M. Janin. — Effects of Style upon Criticism. — The Honesty of the Journalists. — A true Story of M. —— and L'Ecole Polytechnique. — Style and Honesty brought to bear upon Music. — M. Berlioz.

THE writers upon Art in Paris are a subject neither to be escaped from, nor handled easily. While pointing out the characteristic features of the musical world of the French, it is

impossible not to advert to the quantity of words expended upon its cares and concerns by the literary as well as the professional men of the day. There is hardly a circle, be it ever so grave, where the art is not discussed with a fluency and a decision startling to an Englishman, who has become used, owing to the bad habits of a century, to hearing Music mentioned in intellectual society with apology and hesitation. There is hardly a journalist addicted to *les belles lettres* who does not give Music a turn in the course of his month's labours, and vent his pretty paragraphs, not merely in praise or attack of Madame Thillon, the graceful and coquettish little Englishwoman at the Opera Comique, — or Mademoiselle Heinefetter's chances of keeping her ground at L'Académie, — not merely concerning the wild *entrechats* of Mademoiselle Maywood, the American (who should wear a branch of wild vine round her head, or an Indian cincture of feathers, when she dances, so national are her graces) — or the majestic attitudes of Mademoiselle Theresa Elssler, or the brilliant pantomime of her

incomparable sister, — but in eulogy of the grand names and immutable principles of Gluck, Bach, and Palestrina.

But the necessity of alluding to those who influence public taste, in a sketch which refers as much to the social position of Music as to its intrinsic wealth or poverty for the time being, does not make the task easier. Can one forget that, after the publication of certain of the "Pictures of the French," "The Grocer" wrote a letter to M. Balzac, containing a spirited attack on that gentleman, besides vindicating "*l'esprit épicier*" under the charge of "fat, contented ignorance" by him brought against it? — that the *figurantes*, raising their pretty voices with shrill accord against M. Philibert Audebrand, who had sketched a type of their class, entered into a close confederacy that no piece of his, were it tragedy, comedy, opera, melodrame, or vaudeville, should ever again make its way to the boards of the Parisian theatres? What, then, reasoning analogically, may not be apprehended by a stranger — and one, therefore, at best more imperfectly familiar with the world behind the

curtain — who ventures to speak of the critical world of Paris, — of the life, manners, and conversation of its members, as influencing the progress and stability of Art?

The task would be hopeless, as well as ungracious, had not the class in question, partly in jest, partly in earnest, described itself. To begin with the Press. It is needless again to point out how Journalism in Paris — instead of creeping into corners as with us, and using every possible shift to get rid of responsibilities and to disclaim an identity which ought to imply qualities at once solid and shining, information and promptitude — is like Wisdom, and "crieth in the streets." You may touch it, taste it, handle it. You may meet it in a minister's *salon* or at a duchess's private concert; you may hear it bargaining at the *coulisses* with an audible "How much?" clinking in money paid, and laughing at its no conscience over a third bottle of champagne in every third *café* along the Boulevards. "Vive la Bohème!" seems to be the motto of its life. You will encounter the *feuilletonist* one year in all

the slovenly misery of a room which, like the cobbler's dwelling in the song,

. . . served for parlour, and kitchen, and hall!

breathing an atmosphere of tobacco and odours yet less Sabæan. There he sits, knee-deep in wood-ashes; otherwise only one quarter clad in a wretchedly-worn dressing-gown tied about his waist with a ragged silk handerchief, on his head the ruins of a gay Greek cap whose faded embroidery tells of some long-past *liaison:* as foul, disputatious, and rudely-spoken a *mauvais sujet* as ever took pen in hand to pierce a reputation, or to spice a scene for the gross public's digestion. Then, dirt is asserted as a Spartan's self-denial, and a ragged coat as a badge of incorruptibility. You will hear from him the unflattering truth of art and manners. He will tell you of such an actor's cupidity, or such a painter's vanity; how such a *danseuse* was compelled to fail at the Opera because M. le Marquis *un tel* was unable to strike a bargain with her: you will learn the precise sum that —— expended in bringing out his own play, and *fête*-ing all such guardians of the public

taste as will sell themselves for a piece of silver and a morsel of bread. And you will retire — if very young — from the hug of the unwashed garret genius in a mingled state of admiration at the honesty of the Parisian *littérateur*, and suffocation with the evil odours (not air) he breathes. Innocent visitor! those foul odours will have vanished before you return. The honesty was gone long ago!

Come back in three little months, and you shall find that the Journalist has exchanged "the chamber in the wall" for the most magnificent apartments of a superb hotel. Aladdin's ring never worked greater wonders. There sits the Power you left so turbulent, so unpurchaseable, so greasy, so unshorn,—like Malvolio, "in his branched velvet gown, having left Olivia sleeping." A writing-table is beside him, but with more bouquets than pages of manuscript upon it. The Sèvres cup which holds his coffee is worth his month's revenue when you saw him last. *Vive la Bohème!* Your host is playing the part of a man of pleasure, and must suit his conversation to the company he keeps. Ask

him for Victor Hugo and Alexandre Dumas, and, playing with his diamond ring, he will tell you of the fine *esprit* of Madame *une telle*, — of the exquisite *marivaudage* of "*cette chère comtesse*" such another. The men you inquired for were coarse, *passé*. Should your English simplicity lead you to name Paul de Kock, he draws up. You are *too* indelicate. Even De Lamartine hardly escapes — he is so cold, so pedantic, so pompous. Talk of either opera if you are musical, and your enthusiasm shall be quenched by a yawning complaint that Duprez is already *perruque;* has nothing of the tone of good society, — that Rubini is tolerable in half a song, — that Grisi has grown insufferably fat and hoydenish, and Taglioni been sent to (where is the *French* Coventry?) ever since she chose to give brandy and train-oil breakfasts to the Russian barbarians. A silver bell tinkles; and though your host will say "Let her wait," you are bowed out in the midst of such a shower of fine words, — for silence is beyond the Journalist's attainment, though he rise to the seventh heaven of Fashion, — that, whether you laugh

or whether you believe, you are quite sure that the magnificent and *recherché* personage you have left cannot be your friend *au sixième* of the cheapest *rue* in the Faubourg!

Come back once more (when the leaves have fallen), and you may, perhaps, find him restored to his plainness of speech and a garret again; the diamond ring gone, and the Sèvres cup left behind for some less demonstrative successor!

I am not drawing an imaginary picture, but describing what I have seen. Yet, lest any one should think I have aped the tone of those whose influence upon Art I would fain discuss, and have "rouged Truth," in painting contrasts, I can but point to the wonderful mass of words, not without its kernel of thought as well as its clothing of fancy, which M. Jules Janin has poured forth: — now describing the sewers, the *abattoirs*, and the kennel-trades of Paris, with a squalid and noisome force which bears internal evidence of intimate experience; — now fluttering over the artificial delicacies of Marivaux and Dorat (a grasp would destroy them),

to bring their *nuances* into light, with as exquisite and fastidious a delicacy as if his hand were familiar with nothing besides the lace ruffle and the brilliant ring and the enamelled *tabatière* of the Damises and Philintes of the Regency.— And in every line, however it be mystified, there is personal confession as well as personal allusion. I can but point to M. Balzac's fearful and forcible novel, "Un grand Homme de Province à Paris;" — a piece of morbid anatomy, which takes a double strangeness from M. Balzac's subsequent adherence to the very journalism he has there analysed. I can but point to Madame Emile de Girardin's "L'Ecole des Journalistes," a comedy yet more incomprehensibly written to stigmatize a class * to not the first ranks of which its authoress belongs — and not written anonymously: a comedy read, too, publicly to the outraged guild, some of whose members

* One of the main incidents of this comedy is the death of a veteran artist, who has been stung into suicide by newspaper sarcasms. Another (in this, real scandal was followed closely) is a quarrel raised between a public man and his wife — the latter being taught by the journalists to be *jealous of her own mother!*

had assuredly sat for their portraits. London comedy has no such scenes as the confection of the journal, which forms the first act of Madame de Girardin's work; —— Street or —— Square no such gatherings as her reading party; and our fashionable and artistic intelligence of the year 1839 no such entry as the following account of the above, in "Les Guêpes," by no means to be omitted from a chapter of Illustrations of French Journalism: —

"It was the evening," says M. Alphonse Karr, "when 'The Murder of the Innocents' was played at the Théâtre de la Gaieté. Scarcely a single writer charged by the journals to give an account of theatrical representations was to be seen in the theatre. The most influential among the *feuilletonists* had received a letter couched thus: — '*M. and Madame Emile de Girardin request that M.* ———— *will do them the honour of passing the evening of Tuesday, the* 12*th of November, with them, to hear the* "*School for the Journalists.*" — *Nine o'clock.*' — In a drawing-room hung with green, and decorated with rich and elegant simplicity, were assem-

bled MM. Hugo, De Balzac, Etienne de Jouy, Lemercier, Ancelot, E. Sue, Emile Deschamps, Malitourne, Roger de Beauvoir, De Custines, Madame de Bawr, Madame Gay, Madame Ancelot, Madame Menessier. Many women of fashion — some clever, some pretty, — one both — many distinguished artists, &c., were there. But especially might be remarked, among the company, all the monarchs of the *feuilleton*, with M. Jules Janin, their master, at their head. There, too, was represented 'The Murder of the Innocents!'

"The Herod of the drama was not long in appearing: — a young lady, at once finely and firmly formed, like an antique Muse; her beautiful features set in a frame of splendid fair hair. She was dressed in white, and resembled, at no great distance, the *Velleda* of M. de Chateaubriand. She took her place, and began to read a series of fine and clever verses, which provoked in the minds of many the smile which they checked ere it rose to the lips, — a satire against the journalists. The first act finished in the midst of applause. Madame de Girar-

din drank a glass of water; and I trembled. The flower of our journalists were there; and, while ices and confectionary were served to them, I bethought me of the poisons of the Borgias. But what were my feelings when I perceived that almost every man had on his back a white mark! I remembered the *missions* to the church of Les Petits Pères, in the time of the Restoration. It was thus that the agents of the police singled out in the church those troublesome spirits who were poignarded on issuing thence. These two remembrances crossed each other, and I remained uncertain — not whether the five-act comedy would have a sixth act of tragedy, — *that* was past doubt; but whether it would finish like 'Bajazet,' when the Sultana dismisses the hero whom her mutes await at the door to strangle with her terrible '*Sortez!*' — or like 'Lucrece Borgia,' when the heroine bursts forth upon the banquet-guests of her son Gennaro, with '*My lords! you are all poisoned!*' The reading, however, or rather the execution, went on. Some of the gentlemen, who knew by sight the gentlemen of the

press, pointed them out to the people of fashion who did not know them, and applied to each, in his turn, the few lines which were read while the victim was undergoing examination. It was, I assure you, seriously embarrassing; and I thought myself happy to have been only a journalist of passage, and no more. Keen sayings, charming verses, things epigrammatic, true, and unjust, poured out of the mouth of our Herod! There even came a dramatic scene of a high order, beautiful and very well written; and (as Janin * declared in his reply to Madame de Girardin) better delivered than any actress of the Théâtre Français could have delivered it. All this while, M. Emile Deschamps was reiterating at every verse what he always reiterates at such readings, — '*Chā-ming! chā-ming!*' * * *

"The reading was over: not so the martyrdom of the journalists. Madame de Girardin was

* After this reading, the king of the *feuilleton* addressed one of his most graceful and sprightly pieces of writing to the lady, remonstrating against the unfairness and severity of her portraiture, and asking her whether she had not too much confined herself to the kitchen of journalism!

surrounded. Some cried, 'O the monsters!' others, 'You have given them too much wit; they have not as much as that!' — a pleasant hearing for the practitioners in presence! Nevertheless, no one was strangled; no one died of 'The School;' the white marks on the backs of the party turned out but to be the consequences of an ill-timed painting of the doors, done by an awkward upholsterer. The day after, no journalist was to be seen in his coat. It was at the scourer's, and its owner in a pea-jacket!"

Vive la Bohème! Such a life of jugglery and banter and self-exposure, joined with an attempt to lead and to influence,— such a parti-coloured, animated, gipsy existence, assuming Paris to be the world, which it is to every Frenchman, — has not only a charm and an excitement, but also a poetry of its own, suited to the wants of the time. The man who has kept all sorts of company, from King Cophetua down to the beggar-maid, runs a far better chance of being able to amuse the mob who now read, by his variety of illustration and fami-

liarity of appeal, than the wit of the *Mercure* of other days, who vibrated between the *salon* of his elected Geoffrin or Lespinasse and the *salon* of the Academy, and, having arranged his life in accordance with his humours and appetites, rarely ventured beyond the self-prescribed orbit. The Bohemians of Paris (they have taught me the name themselves) possess a style shaped and coloured by the vicissitudes they plunge into, — surprising by the inexhaustibility of its elegant pleasantry, and by the scintillations of a fancy whose faëry-land, however, lies rather in the Palais Royal than the Athenian wood or the Ardennes of the true poet. The haunter of the *cafés* and *spectacles* of Paris will again and again stumble upon fragments of rhapsodical criticism, which, but for this town modishness, as contradistinguished from the air of the country, are almost worthy of being compared with the poetical *extravaganzas* of Christopher North; or snatches of sentimental romance which, of their kind, are unparagoned. I know not where, for style, incident, and (fantastically to speak)

perfume, a prettier type of modern Paris could be found than in the following gossamer fiction; the best paraphrase of which, however, in our more muscular language, would be almost like "a lubberly post-boy" in place of the real Anne Page.

Madame Prevost's Book.

BY JULES JANIN.

"You have permitted to die, while I was away, one of the most amiable women of whom the trade of Paris could, by good right, boast itself, — Madame Prevost, the florist of the Palais Royal. Not far from the gloomy corridor which leads to the stage of the Théâtre Français, behind an enormous pillar, was hidden in the stone, like a violet under a leaf, the shop, or call it rather the parterre, of Madame Prevost. A perennial parterre it was, subject neither to Winter's cold nor Summer's heat of the sun, nor dust, nor storm. A perpetual spring inhabited that massive pillar: — the rose of every season, the pale violet, the modest anemone, the superb camellia, the fra-

grant pink, the dahlia now become vulgar, were more at home in its protecting shadow than in any other place. On its square of four feet the Parisian Flora emptied all the treasures of her basket, from the orange-flower, that coronal of queens, down to the humble daisy. Over this fair garden presided and reigned an amiable and benevolent woman, who had placed it, as by enchantment, in the midst of the diamonds, the paste, the new clothes, the stunted trees, the abortive flowers of the Palais Royal, and its vices, premature as its flowers. For most of the persons who entered those splendid galleries, —the man fresh from the provinces, who arrived only yester-evening; the rapacious Englishman; the loitering grisette; — for all those idlers in the sunshine who have eyes to see nothing, and ears to hear as little, the shop of Madame Prevost had no existence, — she herself even had never existed. Who, indeed, could stop to look at a few gentle flowers, when Chevet, hard by, displayed his flaming lobsters?

"But because it was so hidden, so little known, so concealed as in its own fragrance, the shop

of Madame Prevost was only all the more precious to those frequenting it. It was (so to say) the antechamber of all the loves of twenty; it was the *rendezvous* of all innocent passions, of all permitted coquetries,—of all elegance taking its fairest forms. The young lady — Parisian in her youth and in her lady-*hood* — never passed before that unobtrusive garden without remembering, with a sigh, the first flower she had placed in her bosom. At every hour of the day, you were there offered, as your fancy sought them, finished idyls — tender elegies — eloquent poems; all ready made, and yet all written on purpose: the only *billets doux* which a woman will never refuse. At your need, you would have found at Madame Prevost's the universal language so much sought for by the philosophers. Thus, then, that amiable woman reigned over all the ambitions of youth; and kept in her delicate and ever-open hand the secret of the sighs and the loves of all the world; and, hidden as she was, was the most popular woman of Paris, in the separate world of youth and beauty. * * * She had been herself very

beautiful; and one look at her faded countenance, shrouded among its laces, was sufficient to inform you that she, too, had her own love-story to tell. There was a veiled acuteness in her glance: her smile was sweet and calm, but it came rarely. She had all her life had a passion for flowers: not only did she cultivate them with unequalled success, but no mortal hand knew how to combine and arrange them with such art and taste. She would make a bouquet with as much earnestness as Cardillac the jeweller, when he was showing one of his *chefs-d'œuvre*. When it was made, she would keep it in readiness for her who was beautiful enough to wear it; and if none such came that day, Madame Prevost kept her bouquet for herself, and was contented. To ladies who passed and purchased a nosegay by chance, she would give what she had made by chance: to the husband, who bought a bouquet for his wife as he would have bought a doll for his child, she cared not what she sold, — so well she knew that it would neither be looked at by him who gave, nor by her who was to wear it! She had wares

suitable for every age, for every position in life. She could see, in an instant, what flower she must employ to save a poor heart which was going to ruin, — to reanimate a love which was waning. * * * So far had she carried the science of this emblematical language, that, in her later years, she invented the most malicious epigram ever made against the gentlemen and ladies of the theatre. Taking a handful of hay, and disguising it by a few flowers of lively colours, she would make what she called her '*bouquets comiques*.' 'Good enough,' she would say, 'to throw at the heads of those ladies and gentlemen. What! profane real flowers by casting them at such beings! Abuse the rose! — degrade the camellia! — pour forth my poor treasures to wither, in return for a *roulade*, a burst, a tirade? No, my ladies and gentlemen, I will have no part in such profanations. You shall have some hay,—and, as the proverb says, *the useful and the agreeable combined!*' And, in fact, nothing was so amusing as to see her composing her *bouquets comiques* of hay, lucern, cress, and a few coarse flowers bought

at the Halle: when they were made, she would cry laughingly, 'Only look at my shower of flowers!'

"It was not every one whom this excellent woman would admit to her acquaintance — I will not say her intimacy. Her parterre, it is true, was open to all; but there the common right ended. You entered, you made a purchase, you asked her advice, which she never refused; but then you gave up your place, not to new comers, but to the new comer, for her shop only held one single person. Madame Prevost did not like to part with her flowers in public. She said that the choice of a bouquet is already a mystery, and that to treat flowers like a common present was to take away their perfume. 'Do not talk to me,' she would add, 'of those coarse men who buy nosegays for their mistresses as they would melons for their table! — people who stop at the corner of the street at a fruit-merchant's shop, thrust their red noses into one melon after another, handle one, pinch it, bargain for it, and carry it off in triumph in their hot hands! Fair and good — they under-

stand their business; but let them come here to paw and to pull about my flowers — I would not even sell them a bunch of thorns! And then, do you not see yonder foolish being, who wanders along the *trottoir*, bouquet in hand, as if he said to his neighbours, "Look at me in my nankeen pantaloons and velvet waistcoat: it is I who am paying court to Madame ——, who lives at No. 20. *à l'entresol.*" ' When Madame Prevost was in this humour, she was charming. Her black eye lighted up, and she would smile; and in both eye and smile was a certain ridicule, from which no one would have escaped, if there had not been behind that, grace, *esprit*, and a tender heart, which had compassion upon every weakness, even that of vanity. * * *

"Little by little, — owing to my reserve, my prudence, and my awkwardness, and by only buying bouquets on the *fête* days of Saint Anne, Saint Mary, and Saint Louis, — I was taken into the confidence of Madame Prevost, and into her back shop. This was nothing less than her laboratory, — a sort of reserved garden, where the rarest plants were

jealously tended. There reigned and lived their mistress — there abandoned herself to her melancholy study of the human heart, there composed her master-pieces of a day — what do I say? — of an hour, which were to bloom in ephemeral triumph in the delicate hands or on the fair bosoms of the loveliest beings in Paris. Into this sanctuary, where few men were seen, entered familiarly for many years the only person who had a right to be there, — Redouté, the van Dyck of our gardens, and the companion of their fairest flowers. They presented themselves to him as the Three Goddesses presented themselves to Paris. To look at that gross shapeless hand, and that coarse, shrewd, good-humoured head of his, you could hardly believe that he was that Redouté who in all his life never crumpled a rose-leaf, and could have made the bed of Sybaris without an accident. Redouté was naturally the friend of Madame Prevost. * * I nevertheless made good my footing; and, after some first moments of jealousy, Redouté adopted me, and I was installed in this sanctuary forbidden to all the world, where no one

could see me — happier and prouder of my post than if I had gained the much-coveted honour of sitting beside Madame Chevet at her desk! This sanctuary overlooked the shop by means of a window. Once there, I could see, and I have seen, many a little drama, begun in a sprightly mood, to end fearfully. I have been present at many a whimsical or painful comedy: I have learned many a secret I shall never tell — many a treason no one would believe. Had I not retired in time from this dangerous study, I too should have become a misanthrope, — have conceived a hatred for the world and its crimes, so daintily masqueraded! How many a time has Madame Prevost said to me, by her finger on her lips, 'Hush! you are not to listen: do as Redouté does, and pretend you are admiring my flowers!'

"One day I was alone in this *sanctum* (Redouté was gone to the King's garden at Neuilly to pay his devotions to some flower or other he had christened with a barbarous Latin name), when my hand happened to fall upon a small book, bound in green, which had the appear-

ance of an account-book. I opened it without thinking. What was my astonishment, I may say terror, to find that I had fallen into the midst of the most secret history of Parisian life! A fearful and touching history of faithlessness, and falsehood, and betrayal; but also of devotion, passion, and fidelity. It was there that Madame Prevost entered day by day (as in a ledger) the names of those who ordered flowers from her, with a '*To be sent to Madame* ——, *Rue* ———.' Such was the book. A man's name, and written, opposite to it, the name and the residence of a woman: and yet — will you believe me? — never did one of M. Balzac's romances, even in his best days, when the harvest of his brain and heart was the richest, present an interest equal to those simple names! A person sends a modest bouquet of violets to one who accepts them; the violet becomes a rose; then every day some new flower is added; and then every day some flower taken away; till, at last, the two names no longer are coupled. Did you but know the

short life of those *grandes passions;* as eternal — as the roses!

"Turn another page — let me read on. To-day the sender has ceased to offer his remembrance to its object: but, at the moment when one bouquet dwindles, another is seen arising on the horizon. Through such dim and flower-shaded paths you may trace the history of Love in Paris! Strange, too, how names are connected by this link of flowers, the casual meeting of which you would have thought impossible! Strange the chains which are in turns broken, mended, destroyed! — what bouquets sent and returned! — what a singular and incredible mixture of gallant adventures and fatal events! Here is the bouquet which *she* wore the day her lover was killed in a duel; and the bouquet was not the lover's! I know now where the flower came from, Coralie, which was in your hair that night, and which you said you had gathered in your father's garden! — Louisa, my poor child! I understand the history of the withered blossom beside your pillow at the foot of the crucifix. — Here is one who

has received a rose; soon after, an orange-flower for her wedding: there is *one* happy being, at least! Alas! hard by, is a coronal of amaranths for the young husband to throw upon his wife's tomb!—Such were the contents of that fearful book. * * *

"So absorbed was I in its perusal, that I did not hear the entrance of Madame Prevost, who returned laden with the fragrant treasures the gardens had given her. 'Ah!' cried she, seeing her open book before me, 'what have you done?'—and she took it out of my hands with an air of displeasure and sadness. I knew what she would say, and asked pardon. 'You are sufficiently punished,' she said, gently: 'though you have only read the first pages of the book, you have seen enough to guess at the weakness and treachery which the world contains. You have seen what this world, so brilliant, so polished, so serene, is made of: you have seen what corruption my flowers cover. * * * But the fault is mine rather than yours. I have not only allowed you to possess yourself of my secret, but the secret also of poor Parisian

society. Give me your honour, that no name you have seen written in my book shall pass your lips.'

"She had done; and, closing her book with care, betook herself to her daily task. It was now almost four o'clock — the hour when the Parisian lady, till then indifferent and languid, begins to remember that the *fête* of the evening expects her. I profited that day by my involuntary indiscretion. Madame Prevost forgot to say to me 'Go, now!' as she usually did; and it chanced, therefore, that I became a witness of, and almost an actor in, a little drama, which I may tell you without blame, because it is not written in her book.

"It began by the entrance of a tall, fresh-coloured man, of forty or thereabouts, — an unfinished dandy, who, to be a complete one, would have been obliged to retrace a few years, so awkwardly did he wear his hair, his gloves, and his cane: otherwise he was well enough for the Parisian of the provinces that he was. 'You will take,' he said, without preamble, 'a bouquet to Madame Melcy, Rue

——, and Hotel ——;' and he threw down abruptly two five-*franc* pieces on the counter.

"Madame Prevost followed him with her eye till he had disappeared in the court of the Palais Royal. 'He shall have one for his money,' she said; and of two bunches of common flowers, thrown carelessly into her basket, she made a bouquet; adding, by way of a finish, an enormous tuberose with large leaves. 'Why, you will poison the poor lady!' I said to her. 'I will preserve her from the pursuit of an impertinent fool,' was the answer. 'Do not be uneasy: if she have only nerves (I will not say a heart), she will throw the bouquet out of the window, and deny herself to the man who has sent it. What a clown! to attack Madame de Melcy, so pale and so delicate as she is! Take this bouquet,' she said to a commissioner, 'with the gentleman's card' (he had left it) 'to Madame de Melcy's.' The Mercury departed, holding the nosegay in his two hands. He had stuck the card in the midst of the tuberose: the name upon it was surmounted by the equivocal coronet of a count or a baron.

"'The stupid man!' exclaimed Madame Prevost. While she was speaking, a younger gentleman, at least twenty-nine years of age, came in. He was fat, and had a sufficiently knowing eye; but the rest of his person was so gross, that the glance was lost on so massive a face. Evidently he had been better brought up than the other. He was a shade more tolerable than a Parisian of the provinces; — he was one of the provincials of Paris, who, by residing there, have caught, if not elegance and grace, at least scepticism and *esprit*. 'Madame,' he said to Madame Prevost, 'you will send a bouquet for this evening to Madame de Melcy.'

"When he was gone, 'Here,' said she, 'I shall be neuter — I will neither do him good nor harm. Madame de Melcy shall have a bouquet like every body else; — a few fine dahlias, and some flowers with no scent, that she may wear in her hand, or place in her belt. He may have done wrong to send a bouquet to the lady, but I shall not concern myself in the matter — let him take care of himself.' As soon said as done. Madame Prevost made up

a second bouquet, less coarse, less fragrant, and much less ridiculous than the first.

"This second bouquet despatched, I was on the point of going; when there crept into the shop a handsome youth of eighteen, as trembling and as timid—positively blushing even—as if he had been entering the presence of the lady of his vows. 'Madame,' said he, half inaudible, 'would you have the goodness to send some flowers, without mentioning from whom they come, to Madame de Melcy?' And he offered Madame Prevost a *louis-d'or*. Little astonished at this third arrival, she gave him back seventeen *francs* out of his *louis;* and when he was gone, 'For him,' she said, 'I will do something. Young, handsome, timid, and modest, not wishing she should know where her flowers come from;—I will protect him.' And while she spoke, she took almost by chance out of her basket a few very simple field-flowers, of soft colours and gentle scent, and put together a nosegay one might have gathered in a meadow in June. A fancy seized her, and she placed in the midst a sprig of thyme in flower. I watched

her as she went on. 'It is impossible,' she said, in explanation, 'that Madame de Melcy should not choose this among the three bouquets. The first, with its coarse red flowers, is only fit for a butcher's wife; if a lady were to wear it, she would look as if she had been drinking: the second is too colourless for a pale and languid creature like Madame de Melcy: this, on the contrary, looks lively and modest, like no other one — it will be worn this evening. Are you not on my side? Do not you, too, patronise this young man?' she added, with a smile.

"'To-morrow I will,' was my answer.

"'And what are you doing to-night?'

"'Going to the Opera.'

"'Much good you will do. Will you have a bouquet — I mean a real bouquet this time — to offer, on our behalf, to Mademoiselle Taglioni?'

"It was, in fact, the night when that Marvel of the Air—so light in her step that the very birds might envy her—took leave of us. We were about to lose, if not for ever, at least for a long time,

that admirable creature. All Paris was at the Opera, to see once more its darling idol. The theatre was full to overflowing. I was early in my place, in a box to the left *au seconde*, thinking of the great loss which was about to befall us, when the door of the box next to mine opened suddenly, and two ladies, one very young, the other not very old, placed themselves in front; three gentlemen behind them, — the eldest on the next seats, the youngest on the bench at the back. Judge of my amazement when I recognised the three men I had seen at Madame Prevost's!—the tall, confident, noisy gentleman; the other, fat, and quiet, and worldly-wise; and the boy who nursed his good fortune in secret. The middle-aged lady carried in her hand the huge red nosegay: her young companion adorned her flexible and graceful figure with the field-flowers; they seemed made for her, and she for them, — her bloom was as pale as if it had been the reflection of the daisies: from time to time she seemed to inhale the faint odour of the thyme. I could, with all my heart, have acquainted the *protégé* of Madame Prevost with

the whole of his good fortune . . . but the young enthusiast was not in a state to hear anything.

"The spectacle began. What am I to say of Taglioni? — she was admirable; and yet, that evening, I was equally divided betwixt the goddess and Madame de Melcy, — betwixt Earth and Heaven; the one was so graceful, but the other was so fair! * * The three cavaliers behind her were all of them occupied, each according to his nature. The tall one applauded outrageously, and cried '*Bravo!*' — the fat one profited by the noise his neighbour kept up, to murmur, in a low voice, into her ear some of those words which have too much meaning or not meaning enough, — the youth, absorbed in his silent contemplation, could not, in his seventh heaven, have told you who was with him. Of the three, the first was stupid, the second too clever, the third inexperienced,—he had therefore the advantage. * * *

"At last, Mademoiselle Taglioni had danced —with what exquisite elegance I need not tell you — the admirable last step of *La Sylphide*. The house rose like one person; hands, feet,

voices, and hearts were united in one general applause: not a single lady kept that night in her hand, or on her heart, the bouquet she wore. There was an avalanche of flowers at the feet of the enchantress in the twinkling of an eye. * * Madame de Melcy was perhaps the only one who had kept her modest bouquet in her *ceinture*, till, unluckily for himself, the youngest cavalier, till then motionless and dumb, — whether he was awakened by that universal enthusiasm, or whether he wished to show that he had seen the ballet, — suddenly began like the rest to make a noise and to applaud. Then the young beauty drew hastily her bouquet from her belt: once more aware of its odour, she detached between her lips the sprig of thyme, and then launched her precious nosegay at the feet of Taglioni. Hardly, however, was it on the stage ere she repented, and, turning to the gentlemen behind her with a pretty air of entreaty, 'Which of you,' said she, 'will bring me back my nosegay?'

"Bring back a nosegay out of such a mountain of flowers! When the three heard the

orders of their Empress, you should have seen the difference of their attitudes! The tall man answered, with a laugh, 'that it would be as easy to find a drop of water in the sea;' the stout one called the lady '*capricieuse*,' in an insinuating tone; as for the youth—he was gone, like one possessed, to hasten on the stage. The tall man gave the lady her shawl, the fat one his arm: I left my box to offer my adieus and last compliments to Mademoiselle Taglioni.

"In those days, one could get upon the stage of the Opera without an ivory ticket, if known to the door-keeper. There stood my youth, panting and impatient, besieging the door in vain. It opened for me and for him. The adorable Taglioni was still on the stage, in the midst of her pile of flowers; at once so happy and so sad, that she seemed to wish in the same instant to laugh and to cry. She gave us her two small hands while saying adieu, when on a sudden she drew back, startled by the sight of my young lover burying himself among her flowers, to recover the bouquet of his mistress. How should one be able to perform such a feat when

only eighteen? I explained, in a low voice, to Mademoiselle Taglioni what was the matter: she made a little flight backwards, as if to say, 'Search carefully.'

"When she had withdrawn, I found, with little difficulty, among the heap of camellias and roses, my charming little nosegay of field flowers. No wonder: I had seen Madame Prevost arrange it flower by flower; I had admired it all the evening on the white bosom of its wearer. It was the only one of its kind. I stooped and took possession of it. 'Sir,' I said to the unlucky young man, 'have you found the bouquet you were seeking?'

"'Alas! sir,' was his answer, 'I am out of my senses! I do not even know what I am seeking!' and was again beginning his hopeless quest; when over the stage poured a swarm of inferior *danseuses*, who were come to share the trophies of Taglioni. In another moment we were in the street together. 'Shall I come to your assistance to-morrow?' said I.

"He looked at me in astonishment, as if I

had been as mad as himself. Nevertheless, as I had the appearance of being sure of what I was about, he eagerly accepted this unexpected assistance, and agreed to come to me the next day.

"He was exact to the instant. At nine o'clock he was with me, dressed for a ball. 'Well,' said he, sadly, 'any news of our bouquet?'

"'None,' said I; 'and it would not in any case have availed you to have taken back flowers withered, and which had been offered at the feet of another woman. You are in love, and of course you are as superstitious as a heathen. Just put this broken sprig of thyme in your button-hole; it will do you no harm,— at least it has done me good. Remember, however, I do not give — I only lend it you.'

"He looked at me so dolefully, that I could have laughed in his face; but he took it (your lover will cling to a blade of grass), and we went together to the ball of Madame de Melcy, to whom he was to present me. The two rivals were already there, — they had sent thither all manner of rich and rare flower-homages. The

rooms filled slowly. The pretty widow was silent and thoughtful. He introduced me, and she was receiving me with languid indifference, when on a sudden her countenance became animated, and she smiled again.

" ' You are late this evening, Arthur,' she said to the youth.—

" That day month they were married. He wore in his button-hole my sprig of thyme. ' Now that my talisman has taken effect,' said I, ' you must give it me back this evening.'

" ' Give back what ? ' said Madame de Melcy.

" ' My sprig of thyme,' said Arthur; ' it belongs to him, and he lent it me a month ago :' — and as he gave it back, he got up a sigh.

" ' Pray,' said Madame, ' let him keep it.'

" ' And what will you give me, Madame ?'

" ' Nothing for nothing,' was her answer, in a low voice, and she showed me (she had worn it on her bosom) the other half of the sprig of thyme, which she had kept. It was now quite dry.

" I went back to Madame Prevost, and told her my history.

"'Good,'— said she, 'I did not expect as much as this. And you have seen Madame de Melcy since?'

"'She is gone to her estate in Normandy,' was my answer.

"'"Mid the thyme and the dew,'

sang Madame Prevost, gently.

"But, alas! she is no more: — so excellent, so indulgent, so intelligent from the heart! — she is gone; and there is no more poetry in the rose, nor scent in the violet; and flowers are again nothing better than things to wear and throw away. Who is there — now that she is dead — to make us a whole drama out of a sprig of thyme? And her book—what think you has become of it? She burned it herself, four and twenty hours before her death; watching with a tranquil eye the last spark of the fire which consumed so many ill-kept oaths, so many prayers so often heard, so many promises cast to the winds. With Madame Prevost are buried all the mysteries of the human heart she had discovered, —all that history of the world of Paris which I

should take good care not to disclose if even I had not passed my word to her."

That the real Madame Prevost was about as like the good faëry here represented as the stage shepherdess is to the real Mopsa, may be an ungracious thing to state at a moment when the reader, it is to be hoped, has been pleased by the elegant little romance in which she has figured.

But the cosmetic style which has made her what she seems is not without its influences. The power of making something out of nothing, — of building reveries, and histories, and sentiments upon facts or feelings one half imaginary, — is pernicious enough in its effects when brought to bear upon criticism by those who are earnest in their aims and purposes and deeply instructed in their subject, and who, in the fulness of their enthusiasm, make what is possible and what is impossible alike their ministers. But this is not exactly the case with the Bohemians of Paris, if all tales — if their own

tales — be true. Their brilliant sleight of hand, it is to be feared, is at the command of the highest bidder, and employed alike on what they understand and what they do not understand. We English do not dwell in an Elysium of Spartan incorruptibility; but there are few instances in our journalism (none, I would boldly say, among writers of common respectability) parallel to the case of the brilliant *feuilletonist* who has attacked in "Le ——" the identical person and principle that he was at the same time defending in "La ——;"—who will bestow some of his most exquisitely turned and sincere and convincing sentences publicly to entreat the fascinating Mademoiselle —— to devote her talents entirely to comedy, — while she has in her desk a private letter, no less exquisitely turned and sincere and convincing, to encourage her to an exclusive devotion to Melpomene. English morals — to speak without reserve — make it impossible to illustrate the strange traffic of opinions for favours which is a part of the trade, in all its ramifications. Suffice it to say, that the old *droits du seigneur*

hardly exacted more than the privileges which some of these graceful and delicate analysts of Drama and Music and Dancing have arrogated for themselves — and obtained. But the value they set upon their own expressed judgments, apart from the purchase of sensual indulgences, may be gathered from an occurrence which was related to me on authority not to be disputed, and which is not the only anecdote of the kind that could be told.

Once upon a time — I am not going to specify date, name, or journal — there appeared, in no obscure print, a violent attack upon L'Ecole Polytechnique. The attack was by M. ——, a well known and popular *matador* of the press; who, while he walks on the line which separates sense from nonsense, as often falls by accident into a poetical vein, as into the high bombastic fustian which befits a Tilburina or Whiskerandos.* M.——'s personality and abuse,

* As a specimen of the latter, I cannot withhold a passage from a *feuilleton* on the Romeo and Juliet Symphony by M. Berlioz. Of the *Scherzo* of Queen Mab,—" This is indeed faëry music," says the writer; " we could fancy we

then, was a thing not to be swallowed without a wry face by the school. The fiery young spirits rose *en masse* to resent the insult. A court martial was called. The journalist was to be dealt with. As the whole school could not go, however, six youths were selected by lot for this interesting service. To the house of the unlucky *feuilletonist* they marched — stern and civil — the last guests a knowing Scapin would care to turn loose upon his master. M. ——, accordingly, was "not at home." They *must* see him, however, they declared. When *could*

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hear the dew-drops falling into the urns of the flowers, where the little sylphs paint each other's noses with the yellow dust of the stamina. We are entirely transported into a world of fantasy. The toad shakes its silver bell; the spider with its long paws runs along the mullein leaves; the lazy elves unstring their necklaces of pearl, which they throw into the crystal lake — the fall tracing sonorous circles which spread wider and wider." Enough of M.——'s criticism: it is but another gloss upon the text furnished by his more distinguished brother artist, — the reader of Madame Prevost's book,—when, after writing in the most magniloquent phrases concerning the selfsame symphony, he said to a friend, "C'est charmant! charmant! — mais, enfin, je ne comprends rien de la musique!"

they see him? After ten minutes' parley and running backwards and forwards, Scapin found he had been mistaken,—was sorry to have kept them waiting; and, since no better could be, they were admitted to the presence of the great man of the press. One had need be sustained by a strong sense of duty, when confronting such a half-dozen as ranged themselves silently in the journalist's *appartement;* but M. —— had only a good face to put upon the matter, and, with many bows and smiles, begged to know what had procured him the distinguished honour of such a visit.

"You are M. ——?" said the spokesman.

M. —— has no particular respect for his name; but people dare only deny their identity in the third act of a comedy. "I am."

"And we are from L'Ecole Polytechnique."

Another deferential bow. "That, I am aware, gentlemen, by your dress. May I ask to what I am indebted for such a compliment?"

"It is soon told: we are here on simple business. You are the author of the article in 'Le ——,' concerning our establishment?"

There was no denying this. — It had been M.——'s painful duty; indeed, journalists were called upon to do violence to their feelings, in no respect more stringently than when compelled to acquaint the public with unpleasant truths.

"Truths!" echoed the spokesman. "M.——, you know, every one knows, that what you have said is a lie!"

"*Messieurs!*"

"A lie, M.——! and here is a note which we have written, contradicting your assertions. Sir, you will sign it, and print it as your own in your next paper. This is the object of our visit." And a note of the most unqualified and abject apology was "put in," as the law phrase runs.

M.—— was horror-struck. Afflicted as he was to have caused such a brave and honourable body of gentlemen the slightest uneasiness, they must feel that their anger was unreasonable. It was an impossibility — an outrage to his conscience. What he had written had cost him already — Heaven knows what it had not cost him! but his duty to the public had demanded the sacrifice.

"You will sign that paper," exclaimed the sestett, in a louder and more insolent tone.

"Impossible!" was the reply of M.——, with a more courteous bow.

"Then, sir," said the first spokesman, stepping forward, "but one course is left to us. You will give me satisfaction."

"My dear sir! — you must permit me — the thing is unheard of! — I have written from a sense of duty, and, as I have said, not to disturb any one; and, as to demanding satisfaction, I have not been insulted. It is a totally professional affair."

"Well, then," said the second of the band, advancing and filliping the dismayed *feuilletonist* on the face with his glove, "are you insulted now? Will you now sign that paper? or give M.—— satisfaction? Another '*No*,' and you shall be accountable to me as well as to him, — and so on. Here are six of us!"

"Really, gentlemen, any thing so unheard of, any thing so peremptory as this, I have never met with in the course of my arduous labours. The situation you place me in.....

the earnest wish I have not to disoblige. . . . and as the best of us are liable to deception . . . . . "

"In short, M. ——, you will sign the paper and publish it." . . . . . And M. —— signed.

"Now, then," said the first speaker with a contemptuous smile, "we have attained our object. We do not wish to ruin you, M. ——, knowing that you write for bread; and we cannot degrade you further. We will not insist upon your publishing this document, but shall keep it in the archives of L'Ecole as your own testimony to the value of your own word. Good morning, M. ——."

So much for the light infantry of Criticism in Paris! With a command of words so extensive, and a knowledge, not of principles merely, but even of terms, hanging so loosely about them, it is not wonderful that, to a large portion of their gayly sounding analyses, and picturesque rhapsodies, might be applied the Quaker's reproof to the soldier in the stage coach, — "Verily, friend, thy drum is a type of thee; it

soundeth by reason of its emptiness." It is not wonderful that they should feel most at home when their subject, by its remote vagueness, is one to embroider with glorious language, rather than to dissect with keen thought. Hence, the imaginative and obscure and gigantic works of M. Berlioz, before which deep theoretical musicians hesitate, as too *bizarre* and familiar, too strangely compounded of what is the tritest in melody and what is most daring in construction*, offer no difficulties to these confident and florid rhapsodists. But the influences which this gentleman's compositions and criticism exercise in Paris are at once too extraordinary

* I must not be understood here as presuming to offer an opinion of my own on these much-canvassed compositions. In spite of reiterated attempts, the opportunity has never fallen in my way which could justify me in describing the impressions I had received from them. They are here mentioned solely to illustrate the confidence with which the very works demanding the widest knowledge and the most passionless impartiality for their right appreciation are laid hold upon by those possessing little positive learning, and only "pretty words" (to borrow John Wesley's endorsement of some of the apologetic letters of that termagant, his wife) in place of clear ideas.

and too characteristic of the effect of Manners upon Music to be dismissed at the close of a chapter. In the mean while, to place the authority of the journalists in its true light, it is enough to say that were their powers of comprehension indeed raised to the poetical heights they fancy they occupy when admiring the works of M. Berlioz, they would not satirize the worthies of Art for the sake of any younger successor, — remembering that, however high their idol is enthroned, the topmost step of a staircase stands not self-balanced, save by miracle; and that their own creed and manner of life bind them to believe in no marvels, save such as are wrought by the charlatanry of a Robert Macaire!

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